

MAURICE ROSSMAN'S

LEADING

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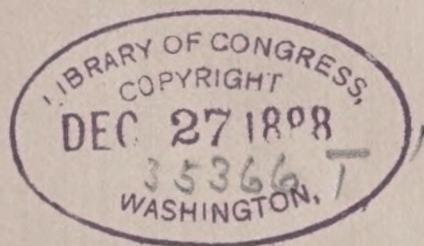




# MAURICE ROSSMAN'S

## LEADING

BY *✓*  
*ms* MARY R. BALDWIN



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# MAURICE ROSSMAN'S LEADING.

## CHAPTER I.

MAURICE ROSSMAN was one of a large number of medical students whose diplomas gave them the right to offer themselves to a suffering world, which is ever looking and longing for the angel of mercy to move the healing waters. But Maurice Rossman had no real knowledge of these wants of the world, and certainly no consciousness of his own especial power as a healer. His physical make-up was after a perfect pattern and how could he be expected to understand that the majority of human machines were not in running order, and were wearing themselves out by useless friction?

Whilst this young doctor was enjoying his wander year, a message came to him from his aunt—a middle-aged lady, and a widow—who resided in one of the western towns of his native country, inviting him to Union City, and giving him a flattering view of the place as a starting point for his practice. He was in Europe when the letter came to him and when he read the address *Doctor Maurice Rossman*—the words, “Who is Doctor Rossman?” rose to his lips, for he had not seen the title before since the day he re-



ceived his diploma. Like a flash the memory of that experience came to him, with all he had feared, and all he had hoped, and he felt almost quickened into enthusiasm for life's purpose. He wandered out and sat under the Roman ilere with the foot-marks of the ages around him, and became absorbed in his reflections. A slight breeze lifted the letter and wafted it towards a bit of the ruin of a pillar, then he roused himself, caught the paper and read its contents through.

He shuddered slightly as he finished it, although he was one who was not cursed with undue nervous sensitiveness; but this idea of his aunt—a life for him in a crude western town—it was surely preposterous! He rose from his seat, looked down at the dust, old-time dust it was beneath his feet, and speculated upon the ways of other feet that had trod the same ground before civilization had conceived of extending her patronage, even to the continent, upon which this western town had newly risen. He walked uneasily back to his room and began to arrange arguments against this strange proposal. "I mean to cast my lot when the proper time comes," said he aloud, and he stood as he spoke, in a graceful attitude, and his tones mere modulated as if he were speaking to a listening critical audience, "but I must cast it in a place where formative influences are not predominant ones; I must have helps to growth, crudeness in any form I cannot endure!" And the young man took in the air



that was filled with the odor of age, as if old air, though laden with the seeds of death, was the very elixir of life to a man.

His arguments he judged were conclusive, and with this thought he sat down and wrote a very kind, polite letter to his aunt, and felt for the hour, that the matter was at rest. But that night upon his bed a new train of thought took possession of his mind and seemed to carry him outside of the life of careless ease and to take him back into the past. He saw his father's professional life as he had never before seen it, and it seemed to demand of him an answer for his own course, and to ask what the second Doctor Rossman was gaining for the career upon which he had pledged himself to enter. He seemed to hear again his father's last words whispered in the far-away home, "Honor your profession, my son!"

"How shall I honor it? When shall I begin?" These were questions that offered themselves with real force for the first time. And these questions from this hour pursued him night and day, wherever he wandered in the ancient city, whether he looked upon statuary, paintings, or ruins, a voice from a past record of achievements—his father's achievements—seemed to press him for a promise for his future.

It happened through this new, and to him unaccountable influence, that in a week from the day that he wrote the letter to his aunt declining to



consider her proposition favorably, he wrote her another letter telling her that he should sail for home the next week and should probably start for Union City as soon as he had transacted necessary business in his native town. His sleep that night was not dreamless, and his vision showed him a little black board bearing the name, Maurice Rossman, M. D., swung by the western wind. When the morning came and he wandered out to the Palatine and took in the grandeur of the old ruined Rome, and saw the suggestions of modern life in the newer Rome; the contrast somehow seemed an offered preparation for his coming crude experience in Union City.

But why should a young man, without pecuniary needs, without enthusiasms, and seemingly without a sacrificial spirit, pledge himself to an unpleasant path when many avenues that promised delightful experiences in professional service would have opened themselves to his feet? What was the influence that forced him to his decision? Something surely, back of his aunt's wish! Who can understand the secret train that is laid to fire a soul with a purpose to do a peculiar work in the world?

Maurice Rossman had no clear sense of the nature of the motives that were leading him away from his preferences, and if he dreamed of martyrdom for himself, he saw as many of us do in our projected sacrifices—the stake piled with



the fagots, but deliverance before the fire was kindled. Or if he went further—he might have composed the death-song, but had no thought of the death-agony. He took in at the last moment all that was possible of the impressions of Roman grandeur and then went forward to what seemed a kind of fate.

The weary ocean days were at last over, and then he found himself at the gate of his old home, looking into the front yard where so many times before he had looked when hurrying home from school and college to spend his vacations in the spot dearest to him on earth. He entered the yard, walked slowly up the path, and raised the old brass knocker. Its clang brought the servant to the door—he asked for his sister—Miss Rossman; took a seat in the wide hall and brought back the days when his father, Doctor Rossman, was the dependence of the sick, and the poor, and the needy. He saw them waiting in rows for a word from the man who was a physical and mental strength to them, each chair was filled by his imagination, with a patient.

In one sat hysterical Nancy, who was sure to go out, with her features relaxed; next was rheumatic Tim, who seemed to have less of a limp when he left the doctor's presence than when he entered. There was the wife of the sot—Jack Downs, who whispered her trouble, and then received such a benediction that she



was able to take up her life-burden and bear it with a lighter spirit until she came to another hill of difficulty when she returned to her helper who interpreted so well for her the help of the Mighty One. Surely the first Doctor Rossman's service in his profession was of a peculiar nature!

But the door opened and a lady who might have been forty, entered. She gave a little exclamation of astonishment, and then came forward to greet the young man. She led him into the old sitting-room where from the open door he could see the apple-orchard and the garden. A flood of memories rushed over him, and again he saw the town whither he was bound, in all its newness, saw it all in imagination after old Europe—and his old home.

The woman by his side was many years his senior, they were not children of one mother. Doctor Rossman was a widower with a grown daughter when he was married to the young creature who became the mother of Maurice. There had never been a sympathy between the brother and sister beyond what kinship required. The daughter had inherited the father's sterling integrity without the little adornments of character that had made him so useful and attractive. To live an upright busy life was her aim, and the questions of the day and the revelations in the world of art, and the restless ambitions of woman in these directions did not trouble her,



The old homestead had been willed to her, and she had enough money safely invested, to insure a comfortable living for herself and something to dispense in her charitable visits. According to her mental standard, and spiritual vision she kept up the traditional Rossman dignity but she could never possess the peculiar something call it influence, or inspiration as we may for which some lives are known, and which in Doctor Rossman had been called by his townspeople—kindliness, but there were a few that never gave it a name because it was of that subtle nature which placed it beyond the reach of classification if it was rightly appreciated.

"Amanda" began Maurice breaking the silence at last, "I did not write you my plans, and you may be astonished to hear that I am going to Union City to begin my practice."

Maurice Rossman could not find the courage to tell this practical woman how he had been led to this decision, even if he could have explained the influences that had been working towards the final conclusion, he knew she would not have seen things with his eyes, and would as usual have called him a "visionary boy." She expressed her surprise that he should go so far from home to find a suitable place for settling, but the thought of the long miles that would separate them, gave her no pang for were they not already at antipodes through the distance between their natures?



Miss Rossman however, as she looked at the tall figure of her brother and noticed how handsome he had grown since he had last stood in the old home, could not help seeing that he resembled their father in many respects, and that the same winning expression was about the well-formed mouth—for his father's sake she would always love him, and when he had left her side and passed into the library and she was alone, the room felt empty without his presence.

Maurice Rossman stood looking at the rows of books that had been his father's. They were old books worn and faded, by use and time, and in the march of science, many of their theories had been left far behind, and yet they had been mental helps to his father, who had never become a slave to their formula, whilst he was always ready to bow before the conceptions of those who had themselves bowed a willing ear to the inspired voices of their age. Long he remained standing before these book-shelves hearing as he had heard in Rome, the words, "Honor your profession my son!"

These books had been left by a will to himself, for this they would always be treasured by him. He left the library and went out to the garden, then he visited the orchard where he found the old rustic seat which from early spring on to the last autumn day had been an inviting resting place, a spot too where much



of his planning had been done, where his young joys had been lived over and where tears of sorrow had been allowed to flow unseen. As he took the seat made sacred to him through associations with his heart's deepest experiences, he felt something that was so new and strange to him that it startled him. Was it a consciousness that a change had been wrought within, or was it the knowledge emphasized by this last visit to the old retreat, that he was burning the last bridge behind him?

Maurice Rossman was looking with new eyes upon old scenes. The twilight came on and Miss Rossman came out in search of him. He heard the sound of her steps, and rose to meet her, perhaps down deep within him there was a yearning for a tender feminine sympathy, if so he made no sign, and his sister, if she longed to tell the handsome young man of her regrets that life's duties must separate them, perhaps forever, did not express her thought; she had trained herself through the long years to a silence upon affairs that touched the deepest feelings, and her pride would not allow her to change her practice for even a peculiar occasion. She took her half-brother's offered arm and the housemaid saw them walking in a stately way up from the orchard path, and said to herself—"Well, I never! I should think she might cry a little or look as if she were sorry that he was going. Tall and grand as he is too. Too fine



for this town, but yet it would have been pleasant to have had another Doctor Rossman."

The next morning before the dew had passed from the flowers the young man took the road towards the cemetery. He reached the family burial lot, and stood with uncovered head above the two graves. The violets were in bloom and he felt as he saw them a thrill, which might have been gratitude for their unconscious tribute to the memory of his dear ones, and as he stooped to touch the simple blossoms, and remembered how near to nature his father had lived, he thought it might be that in the vast, unexplored domain of spirit there might be conditions that would allow the recognition of the violets' faithful, loving service.

He read aloud the words cut into the stone at the head of his mother's resting place, the mother of whom he had no distinct recollection, "*Elsie, wife of Maurice Rossman, aged 18 years. A flash of light across my way.*" He bowed his head and thought of his father's long years of devotion to the memory of the young wife, he wondered what peculiarity there had been in this marriage relation that death itself had seemed to essentially strengthen it, and that had made the long years empty, to the faithful heart, of other feminine attractions.

"I wonder how many women there are in the world," whispered Maurice, "who could inspire a like devotion?"



Maurice Rossman, the younger, had no real acquaintance with woman's character, he had known nothing of a mother's influence, and had gained nothing from his taciturn, practical sister to help him in his judgments in this respect. In early youth he had been shy of the opposite sex, and during his college-days had—what shall I say, *missed* or *escaped* all love entanglements? and so at the age of twenty-eight he was a stranger to the wide and mysterious region where sooner or later the masculine experience must enter to find blessing or cursing upon itself.

"A very remarkable woman my mother must have been," he said to himself as his eyes rested with a tearful gaze upon the epitaph that the worshipful husband had written upon the loss that had been to him life-long. He could not recognize the possibility that his father's loyalty might have been a necessity to his own great soul, that having sworn protection and love for a delicate clinging creature, he had found this purpose enlarged through the very giving, daily and hourly, for the happiness of the one who depended entirely upon her husband's smiles and wisdom for her joy. Neither could he understand then, how much of his father's enthusiasm for his profession had come through the influences of the resistless barrier that Death had placed against the mighty current of his love. The force within him made another curren-



and spread itself wide, and then grew deep and quiet.

He stood long beside the graves, then gave them a farewell look and slowly went out of the yard asking himself the question, "Have I made a mistake? Should I have taken up the work here and tried to be something of a blessing to the people?" Maurice Rossman found himself looking back with his new eyes upon that past self which had never cared to question its responsibility to others, and had not comprehended the wide meaning of the profession he had chosen, or rather of the profession that had been chosen for him. Just as he was saying within himself, "I could never have filled his place," he met an old man who offered him a kindly greeting, and who looked earnestly into his face and said. "I can see your father's look about you; you have his strong build, and you have his head, but I cannot see our Doctor Rossman quite. Let me see, your father must have been about your age when he first came to us. We were a little shy of having him for difficult cases at first, but it didn't take long for him to prove to us that he was master of the situation, and he grew into our confidence wonderfully. I can't explain it all. I think his real power came to him after the death of your mother. It is said that a woman either makes or breaks a man. A woman both broke and made your father. You are going to be a doctor



"I suppose?" the old man asked in a manner that made the young man very uncomfortable.

"I shall try," answered the young doctor.

"Well, yes, you can try. A good number try every year, but few succeed as your father did in helping people, mind and body, most of them stop at the body, your father had a conscience—he couldn't."

The old man passed on, having no idea of the effect of his plain speech upon the son of him whom the town had revered, and still held in grateful memory. "A conscience," and "helping people—mind and body," these words remained with him as he left his native town and went forth to meet a new life for which he felt all unprepared.

It was a cloudy, disagreeable day on which he reached Union City, where he found his aunt waiting at the railroad station for him, with her carriage.

"Ah Maurice," she said, as she greeted him, "I can see your father again in you, it makes me sad and it also makes me glad;" and the young doctor bowed and offered his thanks.

"He has more dignity and less of his father's buoyancy than I supposed," she said within herself, she did not know that her nephew, when he accepted her invitation hid his old individuality under his new purpose. When they were turning into the street upon which her home



was Mrs. Thorn remarked—"I could have wished a brighter sky for your arrival Maurice, I know of course you will not expect to find Italy here, but really I have known those who have travelled and have been enraptured with that fair land to say that our sunsets were of the Italian sort, of course I do not know whether they were right, you will have a chance to decide." The young man replied with his usual courtesy, yet he did not speak with enthusiasm nor even with a hopeful tone, for the crudeness of the ambitious western city had already begun to exasperate him, and while his aunt was admiring the finely-formed young man, he was suffering that first sickening sense of strangeness that sensitive ones, cast into new conditions must always feel.

He retired to his room early that evening without a desire to prove the western sunsets by his Italian memories, and sitting long at his window he tried to realize that he had cut himself loose from the past and that he was about to begin his life of work. As the darkness gathered about him he seemed again to stand by his father's bedside to receive his last blessing, and to hear the words, "Honor your profession my son!" and from out the loneliness and the night of his soul he cried—"Oh father am I to honor it here?"

Did he expect a speedy answer? Would his undisciplined nature have been able to interpret



it if it had come to him then, this answer for which he longed?

The next morning, as Mrs. Thorn opened her window towards the east and saw what the morning promised, she rejoiced on account of her brother's son. Maurice met her upon the piazza and as the sun began to glorify the distant hills his aunt remarked. "Union City is not built upon seven hills like Rome, but it has nevertheless its hills, and you see they are not altogether unattractive."

The young man was in spite of himself pleased with the sight. Mrs. Thorn noticing his pleasure began with rare tact and ready imagination to fill in the picture. "It will not be long now," she said, "before those hills will be crowned with trees, and homes will spring up here and there; it is an inspiring thing, this creation of homes Maurice, my husband was an enthusiast for progress as related to homes. He spent his strength and his life for this young town through loneliness, and loss he worked and hoped. Your uncle was not a successful man as the business men of this city name success, but in the highest sense he surely was, and if this place has moral standards which it holds up to new-comers, it is because he won many a battle for truth and honor in its earlier days. Men of will, ability and enthusiasm may glorify a profession Maurice, and we know youth may be influenced when age will not be. I have wanted to talk with you



about this at the start. Young men from the East so often take up life here in the West in a careless way, indeed I believed they often come in order to find relief from that pressure which the competitive struggling of old cities brings to a young man who has ambitions. I have known young men to come here with the apparent thought of living below the standard which an older place would require. That is a great mistake—we need the *best talent*, the *highest aspiration*, the *truest living* here, where things are in a formative state. We want our pattern to be perfect Maurice. And the highest effort will find itself rewarded by the consciousness that it has helped to raise standards for a part of our country that is destined to become a giant in power! I did not mean to give a lecture,” she added, smiling as she met her nephew’s glance, “but the truth is the subject occupies my mind so fully that it rises to my lips—perhaps too often.”

The next evening Mrs. Thorn received a number of friends whom she had invited to meet her nephew, and Maurice was critically observant of these guests, for he was anxious to learn as soon as possible what the character of the best society in Union City really was. He had short conversations with nearly all of the small company, and was much surprised at what he learned with regard to the professional and business capacity of the place; he found too that the majority of the professions were represented



by eastern men. He discovered also, in talking with the ladies that womanly refinements and aspirations were not wanting, on the whole he was astonished at what he saw and heard, for the young man had made up his mind to meet newness in its most repulsive form.

He noticed particularly a young lady, who was present with her mother. She had a quiet manner and in talking with her he found that she possessed both insight and judgment, with a knowledge of what was best in literature, art, and music. She drew from him facts and observations with regard to his travels, and showed an interest and enthusiasm that bore no relation to the fashionable worships which exalts all that is of the old world, and makes heroes of all who have visited it.

Her mother seemed like one who had received many of life's best gifts, and having been forced to accept meaner ones afterwards, and trying to do so gracefully, had not wholly succeeded in the trying. He could not, as he sat in his room that night get rid of the impression which these two, especially, had made upon him. The next morning as he discussed with his aunt, the guests, he found that his surmise with regard to the mother was correct.

"I know both the mother and daughter," Mrs. Thorn said, "I learned through my husband who had at one time charge of their money affairs, much that aroused my admiration as well



as my sympathy for them. You are right in supposing that they have seen better days, the mother is a native of New England, after her marriage she went to New York with her husband, and lived there until a few years ago when the husband with his wife and child moved to this place. He was a broken down merchant, and had, I think, an idea of retrieving his fortunes here, or it may be, he wished to bury his failure and misfortune away from those he had known. In either case, he was disappointed in the results, and he died a discouraged man. The wife was prostrated by the shock and has not been herself since. I think I can see that her mind is gradually weakening, and sometimes I fancy it is distressing her daughter. Did you notice her anxious glances toward her mother?"

"Yes;" answered Maurice, "but not so much as I noticed the sadness that is like a kind of mist over an expression naturally cheerful and sweet. She seems to be a young lady of more than average mental force, and has her enthusiasms too. In fact, I thought her character worthy of study. You may not know," he added, "that I have not been much in the society of ladies and a knowledge of their thoughts and ways was not in my curriculum. I suppose it is as well to begin the study now as ever. I think I shall probably have, at least for a few months spare time on my hands for this or any



other amusement I may fancy." The young Doctor spoke in a playful tone, but his aunt's reply was given quietly, if not seriously—"I think your profession will force you to the study."

At the end of a week, "Maurice Rossman, M. D.," was in gilt upon a black board that hung before the young doctor's office upon the principal street of the place. His books were arranged in rows, around the room, the new bindings beside the old ones from his father's library.

He had ample time to spend with these books for his professional services were not in great demand during those first weeks of his experience as an M. D. The days passed slowly, and were endured rather than lived, for it is one thing to form a purpose, and quite another to try and achieve it; until one morning in midsummer a hasty summons came for him to attend a case in a locality called *the flat*, where those people of the busy young city who found life's struggle for the necessities, hardest, lived.

A boy had broken his arm, his right arm, the messenger said.

Doctor Rossman felt a sort of thrill at the summons: "he rose and prepared to follow the message-bearer. He reached the little house. The newness had not been worn away by the weather, the unpainted boards seemed to stare at nature—and nature could not keep herself in countenance for man was a hindrance, rather than



a help in the poor quarter. Like a flash the brown cottages of the poor in older places came to his view. Ah, this dreadful crudeness; can I ever endure it? he whispered to himself, even while his professional honor was calling to him to prove himself like a man.

He entered the room where the boy lay—the first person upon whom he cast his eyes was the young lady who had interested him at his aunt's first tea-party, after his arrival. The poor mother had given herself up to her grief, and was moaning, "What shall we do? It is his right arm, and he was beginning to be such a help!"

The responsibility for the emergencies of the case seemed to rest upon the young lady, who had been the boy's teacher, instead of upon the mother.

Doctor Rossman nerved himself for what he felt would be his opportunity of initiating himself into service professionally, to prove also to himself that his medical studies and student practice in hospitals were of avail in his life-work. He drew mentally upon his stored wisdom, tried to call to mind similar cases, thought he remembered one, and the specialist's decision—acting upon this suggestion he signified his purpose to amputate the arm.

"Oh, can't you save it! You must save it!" the poor mother cried, and the boy, with trembling voice, whispered, "Sir, I can't make a living for mother, if you take it off!"

But Doctor Rossman had made up his mind



not to be swerved from duty by the cries of women and children, who in the future might reproach him for his mistake; he seemed to hear again the words of the medical professor, "You must be able to listen to the voice of duty above the pleadings of grief!"

He said to the boy, "You will thank me for it some day, I believe!" He saw upon the sufferer's face signs of the coming struggle, and then he heard the young lady whisper, "Doctor Rossman, you think there is not a chance for him without the loss of his arm?"

The color came quickly to the young Doctor's face, while a feeling of resentment, vague to him, rose in his heart at what seemed to the confident young practitioner an unwarrantable interference with his judgment with regard to the case. But something in the expression of the young lady's face, or it may be something in her tone lingered with him after the words had been spoken, a sort of baffled look came upon his own face, he turned and walked to the window that gave a view of the poor parched yard; he came back to the bedside and said to Miss Emory, "I must go back to my office, I will not be gone long, please remain while I am gone."

Did the young man wish to consult his books that he asked this liberty from duty when the demand was so great?

No; Doctor Rossman had no thought of snatching from the wisdom of his library, aught that



he might have missed in the years when his opportunities were equal to his needs. The truth was—he was hurrying away from human presence—from the influence of Miss Emory's personality, especially to find alone, if possible, his mental bearings.

"Am I so weak as to have my judgment affected by a pleading voice and expressive eyes?" he asked, in a kind of scorn of himself. He wiped the damp from his forehead, intellect and heart seemed to agonize together, pleading for light. Like a flash came back the words, "Doctor Rossman, are you sure there is no chance for him without the loss of his arm? and then like a flash too came a memory of a similar case in a hospital where a noted surgeon had taken the one chance, and had succeeded in saving the boy's arm with his life. He ran across to the drug store, gave directions for compounding a medicine, and when it was ready hurried with it out of the store.

He entered the cottage with something like calmness. Miss Emory, who waited by the bedside, gave him a questioning look. He answered it with a steady, manly glance as he remarked, "I have decided to give the arm a chance, I shall use every possible means to save it!"

The mother was effusive in her thanks, and the patient said nothing, but tears coursed down his face as the doctor ceased speaking.

Miss Emory walked to the window and



looked out. She stood quietly thus for a few minutes, and the physician caring for the boy did not seem to notice her presence. She at length slipped out of the room after telling the mother to call her whenever she might be needed.

The night drew on and Maurice Rossman still watched by the boy's side. On until the morning came he stayed at his post. The boy was sleeping at last and he left him in charge of the mother and took his way towards his home. He went wearily up to his room, and threw himself upon the bed. He felt somehow weak and humbled. "My first professional humiliation has come through a woman" he whispered to himself. He recalled what he had said to his aunt about making a study of women. He blushed as he thought of his first lesson in that study, he fell asleep at last and dreamed that he was in Rome standing before the the picture of a Madonna, and in the dream experiences crowded themselves in reckless confusion; he heard the unfortunate boy's cry to him to save his arm, and then his mother's pleadings. Looking again into the face of the Madonna, he seemed to recognize the earnest expression of Miss Emory's, then the sadness and and dignity and sweetness of the two faces seemed that of one face and held him by a strange fascination.

The sun was shining upon his bed when he awoke. His first sense of consciousness brought



a pang to him. Then his thoughts flew towards the sick boy. He arose and dressed himself, and went down stairs to look for his aunt. He was filled with a longing for sympathy. His first impulse was to tell her of his experience of the day before, as a boy might tell his mother of his first trouble. But he told her nothing of the affair so important perhaps to his future professional course, except what seemed due to her as his father's sister.

He passed his morning meal in a kind of abstraction, quite foreign to his usual manner, then went down to his office and writing a sentence upon the slate hanging upon his door, took his way towards the cottage upon the "flat." He found great encouragement in the boy's condition, and received from the mother grateful words for trying to save the arm, with a guilty feeling that shaped itself into the self-accusation, "You would have maimed the boy for life if your hand had not been stayed through another's words; you have no right to the praise or gratitude." He examined the patient carefully, gave his orders quietly and then returned to his office. He took from his father's books a volume—an old one—and sat down to study one of its chapters, but he could not fix his attention upon the subject presented, indeed! all abstract truth and science seemed inadequate to his especial need. He wondered whether his father had ever come so near to sacrificing a chance for a patient. He



wondered, too, how it was possible for doctors to hold their profession so lightly when such awful responsibilities were entailed by it. He was astonished more than he could possibly have expressed, that he himself should have come to his graduation days without having realized it. With this first real comprehension of duty and responsibility came a longing for those first careless tourist days, before he had heard the echo of his father's words from out the past, "Honor your profession, my son!" Just here a man came into the office for consultation, which helped him in saving him from his useless painful brooding over what it was too late to change.

The night came and he again went to the "flat."

"I've been thinking," said the mother, "that I'd better send for Miss Emory to-night. Jim wants her, Jim does, he says she's so soft in taking care of him, and she's used to sick people I should think; she was his teacher, too."

"Yes; yes," replied the doctor, "if she can come it would certainly be well."

"Would you be so kind as to stop and ask her on your way back?" asked the woman.

Doctor Rossman being a gentleman could not refuse, even if this freedom with his rights annoyed him. He could be errand boy if the conditions of his professional practice demanded it, he could surrender his fine reserve if he could gain again his self respect, and then he felt that



he could not give the lady his errand without offering to be her escort to the cottage. It would be an awkward thing for him, at least, but however, he had promised to deliver the message.

He reached the modest cottage upon which the vines climbed, he noticed how refinement and carefulness had seemed to aid each other in the attempt to beautify the yard. He trembled as he rang the door-bell. He was conducted into the small parlor where the daughter sat with a book from which she had been reading to her mother; how he told his errand, and how the conversation led on to medicine and kindred subjects he could never recall, though many times afterwards he tried. When he bowed himself out of the room he felt that he was leaving a fine atmosphere and the sound of a low, sweet voice; he felt also that this young creature who had taken the right to question the wisdom of his first professional decision did not utterly despise him, he repeated her words to himself, words which she had given in reply to a remark which he had himself offered about a feeling of growing responsibility that was a pain to him—"It has seemed to me always that a physician's honesty of purpose—that is, his clear determination to search towards the farthest possible light, and to be led on in this light would be a safeguard against criminal mistakes." The little apology, too, he could repeat in his



mind—"But excuse me, Doctor Rossman, presenting theories of this sort to a physician must seem like carrying coals to Newcastle," the light laugh following the words seemed like a ripple upon deep water.

As he walked on, it seemed to him that a new electric current had been established between his soul and certain forces with which hitherto he had known no relation. He wondered in what lay the power of this girl's mind, over his own. He heard again the words and recalled the pleading look which had held him from making a life-cripple of Jim Brown. He shuddered as he imagined the possible result of his carelessness.

His mind wandered in doubt, old standards, old habits of thought were swept away, his inmost soul cried out for a firm hand to clasp his own, and lead him on.



## CHAPTER II.

THE new doctor of Union City could not remain long unnoticed after the news of his family prestige, of his educational advantages and of his travels in Europe had reached the ear of the public.

The city, using the watchfulness characteristic of a newly-settled place, determined to discover whether the young man was likely to prove a worthy factor in the city's progress. What was inherited talent, or the sight of Roman ruins, what all the wisdom gathered from the highest sources if these could not be utilized for the city's needs?

So reasoned the spirit of progress in Union City, and in a sense it had the right to regard thus all who pitched their professional or business tents within its borders.

The demand that a new-comer should prove himself was not unreasonable; the mistake lay in asking for speedy results and in requiring overwhelming practical evidence of ability. This demand has been the cry of the multitude, which has meant persecution of patient souls ever since a turbulent throng clamored that the God-man should show Himself to them if He



were the Christ. All who follow on in the path of true greatness must be willing to bide their time. No voice from the world, no temptation towards self-aggrandizement will lead a truly great soul into the fatal snare of premature self-assertion.

Jim's mother had given in detail the whole affair of the broken limb, the doctor's diagnosis of the case, the change in his opinion caused by Miss Emory's protest—indeed nothing had been left out by the voluble woman, who did not hesitate to declare that it was Jim's teacher rather than the doctor who had saved the limb. As surgeons, among a certain class, not surely the wisest, are considered as heartless butchers who find their chief delight in cutting and sawing, it was not strange that the new doctor was not at once created a hero in their eyes. Miss Emory was astonished and perplexed at certain things which came to her ears, she heard with pain, words that showed that she was exalted in the public opinion and the doctor was abased. She felt for the first time the limitations of her sex, as she found it impossible to defend the new doctor, as she felt he ought to be defended. He had shown himself fallible surely, but had tacitly acknowledged his fallibility, had consented to yield a professional decision to a non-professional suggestion, a something that it does not need a very close acquaintance with human nature to show, is as hard a test as can be re-



quired of some self-confident, inexperienced physicians.

As the weeks passed Miss Emory found her fame getting to be almost unbearable. "You saved Jim's life, I hear," "You kept that doctor from cutting off that boy's arm," or "You stopped that upstart in his bloody work." She was obliged to hear all this, and when she protested, she was answered, "Oh, you're altogether too modest," or the coarser reply, "The women will stand up for the doctors always, when they're young and handsome especially."

She could have borne this, but the idea that one who might have become a power in his profession should be crushed on account of a first mistake, this, to her sense of justice, seemed a great wrong. It became more and more evident to her that if Doctor Rossman became a power in Union City, it must be through a force mighty enough to sweep away a vast amount of débris, which a current of prejudice had left upon the face of opinion.

Doctor Rossman, although answering every call to duty, and attending to the slightest details of his profession with scrupulous care, was living a life of introspection, and was unconscious of this growing feeling against him, and therefore the temptation to prove himself to an impatient public was not thrust upon him. It was at this stage of his experience that he received



a letter from an old class-mate. It ran in this way:

"My Dear Maurice,

Or should I say—Maurice Rossman, M. D.? I find myself wondering again and again how the handsome, fastidious and refined man of our class is getting on in his missionary field; for positively, Maurice, I cannot call your field of labor anything but heathen ground. The boys who have been honored with a line from you don't speak of you by the old college name any longer, and their faces wear an awed expression when they offer an item of intelligence from you, all of which piques my curiosity.

"I should really like to know, Doctor, whether you are completely changed from the merry take-the-world-as-it-goes-fellow to the—well, I cannot imagine what, Doctor Rossman. Send me a picture of yourself, and a glance, I think, at the eyes, or at the forehead will enlighten me. If I see not the straying brown lock of the old days, I shall say to myself if Maurice could train that wayward brown lock into uniformity, why then he could train his own splendid nature into straight-line-duty. And then I shall drop a tear for the past and bury it away from sight.

"Law is not so exacting in its demands, that I cannot find time to read a good novel now and then, and I have taken up Hawthorne's works again, and I am reading them with greater interest than ever before. The last month I have



been deep in the 'Marble Faun.' I think I accept this masterpiece, as the author hoped it would be received, in a sort of dreary way, on the whole; but the moral, Maurice—when I discovered that I said, 'Poor Donatello, and poor Maurice,' in the same breath.

"Pardon me my friend, for I do not mean to say that my old college chum with his splendid abilities and large opportunities bears any resemblance to the Faun, except as the genial natures of the two seem similar; but the truth which the author presents, that human beings of Donatello's character have no place in a world where life has grown so sadly serious; and that such must change their nature or perish through it, was suggestive to me as was that other awful truth that the Faun perpetrated a great crime, and the remorse gnawed into his soul and developed many high capabilities, moral and intellectual. Not that our Maurice could be guilty of a crime—that I consider not possible, but I can imagine that a certain kind of sorrow, or a sudden revelation with regard to his relation to life's duties might work a great change in the one who was the sunshine of his class. Perhaps the matter-of-fact Western life presented suddenly to one of his nature would seem such a decided contrast to his past experience that to his fastidious nature it would be a great shock.

But I will confess that this letter has a deeper purpose than banter and will proceed to explain:



A friend here told me a story a few days ago which has roused all my slumbering knightly impulses until I am much more inclined to dream of knight-errantry than to pore over Blackstone; not that I am in that state that I would not know a wind-mill if I see one, but I find myself repeating passages from the Lady of Shalott and for a week I have been singing by snatches—

'All in the blue unclouded weather,  
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle leather,  
The helmet and the helmet feather  
Burn'd like one burning flame together  
As he rode down to Camelot.'

I see you smile as you read these lines and don't deny that you have a curiosity to know the story that roused this longing in me for knightly defence against wrong. I will relieve your suspense and tell the story.

When I say that its heroine with her mother is a resident of the town where you now are, you will see why I tell my story to you. My mother was a friend of this Emory family of whom I am about to speak, when they lived in New York. She knew of their circumstances and particular trials. The young man in the case, for there is a young man of course, is one over whom Mr. Emory had a care equal to a father's until he became of age. When this young man was in his twenty-fourth year and in the last one of his college course, Mr. Emory failed in business. He had invested a sum of money belonging to his charge, who was the



son of an old college friend, and this money he felt he must replace. Giving up his possessions to satisfy his creditors he found, while conscience and purse were both lightened, a heavy load upon his heart on account of the wife and daughter who must descend from luxury to a state of comparative poverty. In this emergency the wife and daughter proved themselves, as I have heard my mother tell with enthusiasm again and again, strong enough to be a help and a comfort to the man who had been so crushed by adverse circumstances. You have probably seen these ladies by this time and know, perhaps, how they are situated financially. I am told by a friend here that the daughter taught at one time in Union City. But what I wished most to communicate with regard to the matter is this—the young man in the affair stands in the relation of lover to the young lady.

“He knew of the losses of the family, he knew of their sacrifices in order to return every cent that was due him; he knows how the daughter has tried to help in ways that were new and hard for one so tenderly reared, yet he did not refuse the last cent and allowed this young creature to bear her burdens instead of marrying her and taking care of her as he should have done as soon as he had received his ministerial license.

“The fact is, as soon as I learned the principal circumstances of the affair, I determined to



make a study of him, and I have not missed a Sunday at service over where he is preaching. When I decided to watch the young divine, I said to myself—'Whatever you do, do fair,' and I've tried to hold to that purpose. In conclusion I would say that the arguments are all in, and I am ready to declare that he is a deceiver, of the self-deceived sort.

"He is a popular preacher, and an idol with the fair sex. He has the tastes and manner of a cultivated gentleman, is extremely punctilious with regard to society laws and at the same time he affects asceticism. I think this the secret of his popularity. He seems in effect to be saying—'I could shine in society if I would, but I choose not to do so.'

"But the truth is he seems to be counting his laurels or anticipating fresh ones continually, and the fair creatures whose souls are bowing before him to receive a benediction feed his vanity and lead him farther and farther away from sacrificial and noble service. But the charge that my judgment brings against him is that he cannot be true to, cannot even appreciate the love of a great-souled woman like Alice Emory. If he ever marries, mark my word, he will marry a woman whose characterless nature will be satisfied to be worshipped with the many, and who in the end will be a kind of slave to him.

"I have wondered if Miss Emory really un-



derstood his make-up, or whether the glamour of love prevented her from seeing things in their true light. My mother has always insisted that there was no true love on either side, but that the force of circumstances caused the engagement. If this is so, the sooner the affair is ended the better. It may seem strange to you that I am so stirred with the idea of trying to help the lady in some way if possible out of this engagement, but as I have told you my mother is a warm friend of the family and I have learned through her so much of the lovable and heroic qualities of the heroine that I cannot bear to think she may unite herself to this selfish man. And for fear you may suspect I have a deeper reason of a personal sort, I will here confess that the die is cast—and my heart is not free for future disposal—in short—I am myself engaged to a lady in my own city, and if your enthusiasm and knightly indignation do not like the ‘helmet and the helmet feather, burn like one burning flame together,’ then I must say you are not worthy of your friend’s thought of you. I had forgotten to say the minister’s name is Alpheus Lawrence.”

Maurice Rossman dropped his friend’s letter and looked out upon the dust-beclouded street. Then a quick, sharp agony of soul seemed for a moment to blur his mental vision—and when the first pang had passed, his reason demanded that his mind forces should be marshalled and



organized to discern if possible what calamity had befallen his innermost soul. The intellect seemed to question this inner self—"Why are you stricken at the news of this young lady's love-engagement? Had you any lawful claims upon her?"

And voices within him whispered—"The highest claim! the claim of the flame upon the spark, the claim of the summer's bloom upon the sun, the claim of life upon its source!" Then as the calmer moment of thought came he said to himself, "I have been a fool to give myself up to the spell that this woman has cast over me." Then he realized how the impression had been growing upon him that Miss Emory, who with his first care had begun to influence him was the one who had seemed to him ordained to interpret his father's last words to him so that it would be possible for him to honor his profession even in Union City. It seemed then that he could have challenged her reverend lover to a proof of worthiness of the prize, and could have fought even to death for the prize—then he heard scoffing voices—"This Miss Emory, young man—what interest does she have in you except as she would help you?"

He heard a step, he turned to see Miss Emory herself waiting. He rose and the lady at once gave her errand,—“I have come Doctor Rossman to ask you to visit a sick girl who lives upon the flat. She has the fever, and needs



immediate care, can you go?" He gave his promise and the lady went quickly out, and took the way down to the home where the sick girl lived.

Doctor Rossman who a few moments before had been grappling with the demons of despair, now felt a strange, ecstatic thrill at the evidence that this woman trusted him. If at that moment he could have been made sure of her life-trust, perhaps he would have asked no greater blessing. Trust, companionship, and love, he had never, until his experience in this new place expected from woman.

He went down to the flat again, and when he saw the house which like the one where Jim, his first patient lived, was new and unpainted, he was not conscious of disgust, so intent was he upon his purpose. A woman who had heard his step opened the door before he knocked. "Hurry right in!" she said in a hoarse whisper. "She has got one of her awful shakes; I believe it is the very worst one she has ever had, and Miss Emory can't help her any more than I can!"

The Doctor trembled slightly when he learned that Miss Emory was there; he followed the woman however without faltering into the sick room. Miss Emory was chafing the girl's limbs, she started and blushed deeply as the doctor entered. She bowed and quietly left the room.

She went to the little parlor, dropped upon a seat, covered her face with her hands and asked



herself in faintness of spirit—"What can I do? How long can I endure this? And it is the result of my false position, it comes from my supposed wisdom in the care of Jim. And I shall be called by these people who judge superficially until Doctor Rossman proves his own efficiency to them, but how can I refuse the calls of the poor creatures?"

A half hour passed and then the woman of the house came into the room, and in an excited voice said—"Miss—Emory that doctor has worked almost a miracle! Lucy is just like a lamb! They needn't tell me he's a quack any longer—he says it was a congestive chill. It's my opinion that if the flat had hired him *more* and others *less* we shouldn't have had such a run of fever as we have had here. There's a look in his eye that you won't find in the eyes of quacks. I suppose if I had more learning I could explain what the look is, but all I can say is—it's a look that means a great deal."

Miss Emory's heart gave a throb of joy as she heard the woman's verdict. She felt that the words were essentially true with regard to the young physician's nature. When after a few minutes, Doctor Rossman entered the room in his passage from the house she with a trembling tone said, "I thank you."

Doctor Rossman seeing her embarrassment, replied with a forced gayety of manner—"You were called first, Miss Emory, and I am indebted



to you for a good word, I am sure." She answered with more strength in her voice, "I am very grateful to you, Doctor Rossman, on account of these people. The sick girl, Lucy, needs all the encouragement and help that can be given her; if you see her often you will find that in a sense she is much out of place here."

The doctor bowed, was silent a minute, then said as if his sentence could express but a small part of what he would say—"Miss Emory, you should have chosen to be a physician yourself, you seem to have a genius for the profession." He added a "good by" and went out.

Miss Emory went back to the sick-room, she stood beside the bed and looked at the girl as she lay with closed eyes. "Lucy," said the mother, as she felt the warmth of the hand that lay upon the bed-spread, "he's really put new life into you, he's a wonderful doctor!" Lucy opened her eyes, the tears coursed down her face but she did not speak. Miss Emory sat down and found relief herself in a little quiet cry.

"Miss Emory," whispered Lucy, when she found that her mother had gone out and left them alone, "I want to tell you something he told me, the new doctor did—that it was worth while to try and live. I don't know how he knew that I had got tired of living, for I have never really told anybody all about it, and how I could not fix myself just right where I've been placed. I was surprised when he said in a very kind voice,



'You must get well, for your work in the world. We all have a place to fill, and if we try we are helped to find the right one.' Oh, I can't tell you how much courage his words have given me! I've been thinking so long that there was no place in the world for me, and that I couldn't find anything pleasant in life, but this new doctor has made life seem another thing from what it was."

Miss Emory whispered "Yes, there's something for all of us to do, and find pleasure in," but as the assurance came from her lips, she felt that it was offered to an abnormal condition, and she wondered how far Doctor Rossman had used his encouragement professionally, and if he would have told an old man full of infirmities and without wife or child, the same thing.

Doctor Rossman had not spoken without recognizing the conditions of need, when his insight showed him all the environments of the young girl that would bar her from those means of happiness which girlhood in its best estate possesses. He asked himself, how can I tell her it is worth while? Then throughout his consciousness he heard the cry—*It is your duty to hold all human life as sacred; it is your duty to exert yourself to the uttermost to save life!*

That night when alone in his room he read again his friend's letter, and lingered long over the likeness of himself to Donatello. He could not prevent a smile as he glanced into the glass



to assure himself about the "stray lock." The wayward lock was still untrained, but did the analogy hold good with regard to his wayward habits of thought? His memory carried him back one year. He recalled those days in Rome when among the scenes which inspired the great novelist, he read the "Marble Faun," and had been more impressed with the picture of Hilda, than that of the faun-Donatello. But since life with himself had suddenly grown so "sadly serious," the transformation in the character of the faun seemed as his friend had suggested, to bear a likeness to his own experience, and therefore an attractive subject for thought. He began to feel a new and strange sympathy in this subject of transformation. He marked out in imagination a way for himself where conscience, more and more asserting its authority, should demand, hour by hour, a new and higher sacrifice. "Where after one has been once awakened to the call of duty can be found a resting place? Where will it end?" These questions he could not evade. That there had been a transformation in his own experience that was true, but he felt that neither a crime nor a change of place was responsible for it. He could tell his friend this, if he chose to do so, but could he have explained clearly the influences that had been powerful towards effecting this change?

He wondered if his aunt knew of the marriage engagement of Miss Emory. She had never



spoken of it in his presence, indeed he thought he had discovered a slight manoeuvring to try and bring the young lady and himself into intimate relations. He remembered that it had been said that match-making seemed a necessity to childless widows. Sleep came upon him here, and he did not waken until the rising-bell sounded.

"I am to have a few friends here this evening for conversation and music," said his aunt at breakfast; adding, "I have been thinking, Maurice, that you are getting a little too solemn over your professional duties. I feel somehow a double responsibility with regard to you." This was said playfully, and yet with those solicitous tones that seem to belong to a mother's voice. "You are my darling lost brother's son, and I influenced you to come to this place. I did not want you to hide your light. I have been thinking that the loss of the old privileges and companionships must weigh upon your spirits, for I know your nature is naturally a joyous one." Doctor Rossman's healthy complexion betrayed through a deep blush—a blush that the fairest girl might have owned—his confusion, but he did not reply. Mrs. Thorn was silent for a minute, and then said, "Maurice, I want you to sing. Mrs. Emory spoke to me of your voice, she heard it when you sang in church. She has had an opportunity to hear the very best music in her day."

"Yes," began Maurice, "I suppose so, Auntie,



but as you admit, Mrs. Emory is losing her mind's vigor, perhaps her faculty of judging from past standards may be impaired." He spoke in a half-serious, half-humorous tone and then added in a voice wholly earnest and tender—"I certainly should enjoy giving Mrs. Emory pleasure, and as to my growing solemn I am ashamed if I have forgotten my obligations as a gentleman in my anxiety to meet those of my profession; but Auntie please don't expect from me the attractive qualities that marked my father, and made him the popular and successful physician that he was. I have not the ability to follow my professional leadings and at the same time that of holding my own abandon, indeed, I do not seem to know how to be even cheerful under the pressure of the duties of my calling. A goading influence, sometimes it has seemed to me a very demon, will not let me rest, in fact my dear Auntie, since I read your letter among the Roman ruins, my old careless self has been a ruin.

Mrs. Thorn heard these words not without a pang. She did not speak for a few minutes and then she said, as she might have spoken to a child: "I think Maurice that you will learn to feel easy in the service of your profession by and by, and I am proud of your devotion to your calling; your faithfulness and success are making you popular. I think I could predict a marvellous career for a son of my brother—Maurice Rossman."



"Oh, aunt, don't say that, I shall never equal my father. Never! never!!" With these words he rose and went out to his office.

"Poor boy!" his aunt murmured, as she looked after him until he passed out of sight. Sarah, the housemaid, who had come in to take away the breakfast things heard the whispered words of Mrs. Thorn, and said within herself—"It's mighty strange of her to call that fine healthy-looking young man 'poor boy,' rich, and handsome, and smart they say he is too." But Sarah did not know that these very conditions when mixed with certain others may constitute a heritage of sorrow.

Mrs. Thorn mused for an hour, and her conclusion at the end of it was—"I must try and use more tact and lead him to confide more fully in me, for young men who have no memory of a mother's love and care seem to go through life with a part of their natures half-starved. However I must believe that if he finds a woman who responds to his love and is worthy of it, all will be well with him."

Maurice himself, thought as he went towards his office that morning—"What a weak fellow I have been, to whine like a child, on account of my unfortunate temperament. I should not have spoken of my difficulty, but I do crave woman's sympathy. I never was conscious of this craving until I came to Union City. I wonder why I should be here."



## CHAPTER III.

MRS. THORN's invitations were extended to none but those who had in some way distinguished themselves by achievement that meant something for their kind, hence her companies were always limited in number. Descended from a stock which had no patience with people of small purposes or selfish ones, she had her standards that meant exclusion to mediocrity of aim, and she seemed endowed with an instinct, quite uncommon, for discovering the faintest spark of an aspiration in another, and possessed a strange faculty for fanning it into flame. When she came upon such an aspiration her enthusiasm carried her away from herself and she found great joy in trying to help as best she could, towards the realization if possible of what had been hoped for in the better moments of an experience. Through this ability—perhaps one of the highest that may belong to a person, to discover power in another and to assist in its development, after one-self has passed beyond the possibility of a personal achievement of the kind which one would help another towards, she lived a varied and rose-hued life although she had her hours of sharp agony, as one of deep and far-reaching sympathies



must always have. She held a high opinion of Mrs. Emory and her daughter, and from the first, saw in the latter a high purpose framed in the most delicate sensibilities, and a remarkable gentleness, united to a capability for heroic endurance and sacrifice.

When she learned, as she did through the mother's confidences of the particulars of her daughter's engagement, she feared that like many another large-hearted woman she would become the willing sacrifice of one whose very selfishness would to an all-believing nature like hers, seem a virtue; with this fear in her mind, and with a purpose to help in thwarting such a plan of sacrifice, she made plans of her own. If she was in this a match-breaker or maker, I can only say that she belonged to a class that cannot well be spared from a world where the laws of fitness are so utterly disregarded in the domain of marriage engagements. There are match-makers, and match-makers, and do not I beg, give a sweeping charge against the class, you who look into eyes of love, and can recall the word spoken by a friend, that showed you the way towards a final blissful union. It is quite probable that you have never spoken with scorn of this friend's effort in behalf of your happiness.

But to return to Mrs. Thorn's evening companies. She always succeeded in finding enough people even in the new western town to make up her number without departing from her rule to



invite none but those who had a purpose in life. These meetings were informal, and there were none of those attempts at epigrammatic effects that are noticed in these latter days, and found particularly in atmospheres not particularly intellectual. Each one brought something of himself to these entertainments, it might be music, or art, or philosophy, or the last theological venture, or the latest literary peculiarity in style, yet all must be put through the man's individuality and must not have a foreign impress. Mrs. Thorn had a way of humanizing everything. No one dared to appear on stilts at one of her "evenings," and so it happened that these gatherings were thoroughly enjoyable.

Maurice was late in appearing on this particular night. Mrs. Thorn was slightly annoyed at his delay, for she had her little project with regard to Miss Emory's singing, and she had selected for her a song which had been sung by her at a previous gathering of the kind and which displayed to a great advantage the rich tones of her voice. She wished her to repeat it, and was waiting for her nephew to arrive to call upon her, but Maurice did not come and fearing in any way to compromise her friend she requested her to sing.

"Sing the Rest Song my daughter," said Mrs. Emory. Miss Emory blushed, looked helplessly towards Mrs. Thorn, who answered the glance with an embarrassed expression. "I



want you all to hear that new song, she composed it herself," the mother pleaded.

There was a general call for the "Rest Song" and Mrs. Thorn felt that there was nothing for her to do but to join in that call, and perhaps thus help to relieve her young friend's embarrassment. She was not one who practiced the little tricks in the way of refusal which perhaps belong particularly to amateurs, but in her compliance could be plainly seen her reluctance to sing the song proposed by her mother.

With trembling hand she struck the first chord and then in an impassioned way sang the simple "Rest Song" to the end. Maurice Rossman entered the hallway as she was singing the first verse, and he stood outside the entrance door to the parlor listening until the last note had died.

After the moment's hush that followed had been broken by the complimentary words of the company, he entered and passed around offering his greetings to those whom he had met before. When he came to Mrs. Emory she said—"You were late to hear my daughter's song, though I don't think it sounded as it does when we are alone, two tired ones together." Doctor Rossman murmured something in reply, he did not know exactly what, and then he saw what made him wish he had not entered the room at all. He saw the mother make a sign to her daughter which he divined he saw Miss Emory touch her mother's



hand and she blushed deeply as she did so. He turned away and engaged in conversation with another guest, whispering within himself "poor girl! poor girl! she has much to suffer before the end comes;" for the young doctor was viewing the case professionally as well as sympathetically and mingled with his pity for the daughter who must be forced to witness month by month, the mind failure, were his speculations in the domain of medical science.

That night as he helped the mother and daughter into his aunt's carriage and took the driver's seat he seemed to be newly-commissioned to guard the interests of these two, the secret of whose threatening disaster seemed to be lodged in his own mind. If his words to them that night were full of sympathy it was not strange.

Doctor Rossman had constant calls upon his professional service, for the fever raged upon the flat, and his management of Lucy Pearson's case had given him a popularity which was quite unusual in the experience even of medical men. To a young professional man without means a strict attention to the needs of this class would have meant starvation, especially if his charitable instincts had become a part of his conscience, as had Maurice Rossman's. It was well therefore that this young doctor had a patrimony from which he could draw for his needs; the shiftless poor were not careful to pay his fee, and the



poor with a delicate sense of honor and gratitude presented such a pathetic picture to him that he had not the heart to accept the offered pittance. Yet notwithstanding these drawbacks his real gain during this season's sickness was probably greater than he could ever understand; it was a gain for mind and heart; then, although the experience revealed to him the meanest traits and habits, it also convinced him that virtues are not only a heritage, but also, an acquisition, and that flowers may grow by the side of noxious weeds, and amid noisome surroundings. And it surely was no loss to him that his sense of professional responsibility deepened and that the duty seemed pressed upon him more and more to see that the lives he had rescued from death should prove that they were worth saving.

When he took the puny, sickly child from the arms of its exhausted mother and hushed its cries, and when he said to that mother, "*Live*, if not from your own choice, yet for the sake of your child!" was it the man's animal magnetism that gave the power to his words and made the outlook seem brighter? or was it that mysterious something that dwells often with a less attractive person than Maurice Rossman and transforms him and becomes an unanswerable force?

Lucy Pearson had, through this peculiar power been made to believe that life was not such a dreadful burden as she had supposed, and that even to her there might come a joy that



would fill her want. During her first week of convalescence she began to feel a growing purpose to find her place in the world; with this purpose came marching forward a whole army of doubts and questionings that even in the most determined nature will rise to challenge, and to dispute every inch of progress of one who would seek a new path. It was not strange that the girl in the hour of her extremity should go to the one who had first held out to her the hope of better things; and it happened that one night as Doctor Rossman was locking the door of his office, he saw a slight figure beside the building; and a voice which he recognized as that of his patient of a few weeks before asked, "May I say a few words to you, Doctor Rossman?"

"Will you go into the office?" asked the doctor.

"No," answered the girl, "but if you please, I will walk the way you are going and not make you go out of your road."

Maurice Rossman being a gentleman, treated this girl, who evidently had fine instincts, as courteously as if she had been accustomed to the refinements of the best society.

She did not use the moments for meaningless talk or for apologies for her course—she began at once to tell her errand—"I want to speak out to you, Doctor Rossman, because you are the first one who told me so that I believed it, that it was worth while to live, and that there was



something in life for me. Since I have been well I've been trying to find out what it is. I almost gave up yesterday because there did not seem to be any use in it. I tried to do my work better than I had ever done it before, I had so many tucks and ruffles to iron! You see my mother—she is my step-mother—washes for families. I tried to think of my father's words to me when he was lying sick, a little while before he died. I told him how dreadful it all was to me, and he laid his white, thin hand upon my head, and his voice was hardly more than a whisper as he said—'My poor girl, you are like your mother; this is not your life, my child, only be brave while it lasts; and never give up hoping or looking out for better opportunities.' When I was sick I had given up looking for them, and I was not brave; you know that, Doctor Rossman, for I told you I did not want to live. I do not remember my own mother. I wish I could. My second mother is kind and good, but I think I worry her. I think it would be better for her if I left her." The girl paused in her talk, and Doctor Rossman asked, "What would you like to do in the world?"

"I thought if I could go to school again I would study hard and try to fit myself for something—perhaps for teaching, but what I wanted to ask about was this—my father's people are very different from the people down upon the flat. The doctor knew that she would have him



understand that the relatives of her father were quite unlike her second mother. She hesitated as if she wished to make him understand if possible, without seeming unkind or coarse. She went on again—"My father, in the first of his last sickness wanted to write to his sister, but his wife—my second mother—would not listen to it, she said she could not have such high-feeling people coming at the last to rule over and despise her.

"I think though, my father meant to write to his sister about me; I think he meant to ask her to take me to her home, but he never found the strength after he had found the courage, I believed it troubled him that he could not.

"The day he died, he told me where I could find the key to a little box that held a few keepsakes, and when I opened the box I found my own mother's picture, and also the picture of a beautiful girl, and on the card was written—'Annie at eighteen.' I knew that was my father's sister, and oh, sir! she must be a grand, proud lady to have a face like that in the picture. I have come to my question now, Doctor Rossman; I want to ask if it would be best for me to write to my father's sister and tell her what my father meant to do for me, she perhaps would know what I ought to do in life.

They had reached the street that led down to her home. She stopped and asked eagerly, "Will you think it over, Doctor Rossman?" He an-



swered, decidedly, "I will," and was about to add a word of encouragement, when she said, "Good night," and was gone.

Maurice was glad to find his aunt alone in the parlor. She looked up from the magazine she was reading as her nephew entered the room, and laying it aside, rose to meet him with a smile and a word of welcome. He led her to a seat, and taking one beside her, told her of the evening's incident.

"Poor girl! poor girl!" murmured the lady, "I have been myself very negligent in this matter. Miss Emory mentioned her to me. I think she said she had a talent for music. I am much ashamed of myself, Maurice. I wonder what your father would have thought of such carelessness in me. Your father never allowed himself to lose an opportunity for doing good, and he had such an insight also."

"I have been the negligent one," said Maurice, "I persuaded the girl that there was something better for her in life, and then I left her to grope her way in the darkness. Not that I forgot her, but I did not have courage to follow out my leadings in helping her; but you see my duty has followed me and insists upon my attention." He sighed as he added, "I believe I am a fated man, aunt; my professional conscience is getting more and more tyrannical; where its leadings will end I cannot possibly imagine—but I must follow on always."



"I think," said Mrs Thorn, after a little reflection, "I think I can do for her better than you can. I believe that I can persuade her step-mother that it is best for her to part with Lucy. I shall offer the girl a home myself while the plans for her future are unsettled."

Maurice knew that his aunt was equal to the management of the most complex case that might be presented to her philanthropic sense, yet he could not help regretting that he had not himself tried to help the struggling girl in her desire to find her place in life. But the next day when he went home to dinner and his aunt told him that she had been down to the Pearson home and had gained the consent of the woman to part with Lucy he felt much relieved, and so-laced himself with the belief that all had been done more fittingly than he could himself have done it.

"I think," said Mrs. Thorn, "that the proposition was a great relief to the woman; she seems honest and kind, but she told me plainly that Lucy does not belong with her, and that she had been trying to contrive a way to get her to her aunt."

The afternoon of this same day down at the cottage on the flat, was enacted one of those life-scenes that cast a bright reflection upon our poor common life, and help us to imagine vast possibilities for the race that has been touched by the power of a great sacrifice.



"Lucy," began Mrs. Pearson, as she lifted her patched apron to her eyes, "I always knew it would come to this; things that can't mix must part; that's a law. It's a hard law sometimes it seems, but if we don't mind it there'll be trouble from beginning to end. I am going to tell you now how it happened that I didn't mind it. I worked in your father's family for many a year, and I was proud of being called a careful, faithful housekeeper. After your mother died, your father brought you back to his old home to be taken care of; oh, how sorry I felt for the pretty little creature who had lost her mother. I nursed you through scarlet fever and you grew fond of me and it made me very happy. I never had been given a trust and love like it; I think it made a new being of me; your father's sister noticed the change in me and said one day, 'You are growing handsome, Martha.'

"After a few months your father came home from another city, sick, he had a run of fever and I watched with him for weeks, and one day after he was able to sit up, the doctor said to him in my hearing—'I think you owe your life to your careful, faithful nurse rather than to me.' Then your father began gradually to treat me as a friend, and not as a servant; he gave me books to read, and talked with me about them. Your father's sister did not like this, and they had long talks together in the library, and after one of them, the sister came out and said to me,



'Martha, I don't know how I am ever to get along without you, but you, must find another place.' "

"I knew why I was sent away and I packed my trunk, and when I came down stairs to say good-by to them your father came up to me—I can never forget how tall and grand he seemed, and he said— 'You shall not go alone, Martha; you shall go as my wife if you will, and we were married.'"

"Your father was kind to me always; but it was all a mistake, Lucy. We did not belong together, and after awhile I understood why so grand a man married his sister's housekeeper—it was because he thought he owed her a debt of gratitude for her care over him in his sickness, and thought he could best pay it by giving himself to her. I ought to have known that it would not turn out for the best, but I thought I could make him happy and that he could make me over into a lady.

"He tried to hide his disappointment from me, but I could see how he felt, when he could not help me to understand books and could not interest me in the subjects that interested him. Oh, your father was a king among men, but he could not learn to take things as he found them.

"I tried to keep the house clean, and to be economical, and to have a smiling face for him when he came home. He was grateful for it I am sure, and when he said to me 'Martha, you



saved my life, I owe everything to you!' I knew he was trying in his mind to make it seem that he had been a wise man in choosing a wife.

"He had a portrait of your mother hanging in our parlor when we were first married, and one day when I thought he was gone from the house I went in and stood before it, and gave vent to my feelings, for I knew how he used to go in alone and stand before it in a kind of worship. I cried aloud—'Why couldn't I have been a real lady and beautiful like you? Why couldn't he have loved me for *myself*, and not because I saved his life?'"

"I sank down upon the sofa and gave myself up to my woe, and soon I heard steps near, and your father whispered to me, and I knew that he had heard all. Oh, how hard he tried to comfort me, but he was too true to tell me what of all things would have comforted me most—he could not say—'I married you for love, and I made a wise choice'—he could not say that. He stroked my hair and said with a world of pity in his voice—'Poor Martha! poor woman, you have been my faithful wife, and I can never forget that you saved my life.' We went on in the old way, after that; your father never forgot to be a gentleman, and I tried to be pleasant and faithful but I never could learn the ways of a lady.

"When your father lost his money he came West, and then after he was taken with the dis-



ease that ended his life, real trouble began for us. Then I had to begin to take in washing, and it seemed to fill him with shame and anger; the smell of the suds, and the heat from the ironing-fire was all dreadful to him, and sometimes when he complained about it a great deal, I spoke to him in an angry way, but we forgave each other *all*, before he died. When he wanted to send for his sister, I was not willing. I could not bear the thought of her coming to look upon our poverty, and to blame me in her proud way. He forgave me that too.

"You are right, Lucy, in wanting to have a different life from what you get here. I ought to have helped you to find it before, but I was selfish. I wanted to keep you near me; you have your father's kindness, and his grand way comes out in you at times. It somehow holds me to the belief, having you near me does, that I am the Martha that he condescended to make his wife."

Lucy listened, while a feeling of reverence grew within her for this woman who had been, as she vaguely saw, sacrificed through a mistaken sense of duty.

"I cannot leave you!" she cried; "it would be an ungrateful act for me to leave you to bear the hard life alone; you saved my father's life, you took care of me through all those years. Who will take care of you when you are sick?"

"I shall never have a long sickness, it will be only for a short time that I shall need care I



think." Lucy afterwards brought to her mind her step-mother's manner as she turned and said very earnestly—"I know my girl what I am saying. It won't be a long sickness for me, and then could I bear to think of dying and leaving you to go on in a place where you don't belong? I promised your poor father that *his* mistake should not be the means of his child's making a mistake. You would stay with me because you are grateful to me; I say you shall not! It was enough for your father to be sacrificed; you shall not be."

For the first time Lucy saw the meaning of the relation between her father and this woman whom he had made his wife, and she felt that to herself was given the duty of trying to bring comfort and possibly happiness to one who suffered through her father's mistake.

Through the long night she pondered upon it. In bringing back the words of her father as he lay upon his death-bed, she regarded them in the light of this revelation with regard to the motives of his marriage, and she wondered how he could have so misconceived of the obligation of gratitude as to counsel her to seek a new home and leave the victim of his mistake alone.

What should she do, how should she know? These questions, rose and demanded an answer. Her higher faculties, her finer instincts cried out—Will you make gratitude base by using it as a defeat for the accomplishment of higher ends in



life? Then as the tears streamed forth she asked: Shali I leave this woman in loneliness, this woman who was taken from her place in the world, and who can never now settle herself with ease to any condition? All these mental questions, for which she could never have found audible words, presented themselves to her until the heaviness of her soul lent weight to her eyelids, and she fell asleep.

The morning was not long in coming, for indeed it was at hand when sleep came to her. She awoke to a sense of that inexpressible pain and dread, of which finely organized natures are capable, when ideals and actualities are quite inharmonious. She rose, and, putting on her calico wrapper, shook out her luxuriant black hair, and cast an involuntary look into the little mirror that hung upon the wall.

She was for the first minute quite unconscious that the cracked glass reflected her own image, for the question, "How will you decide for your future?" was pressing upon her attention.

Some of us fight but one real battle, while others skirmish with opposing forces all through life. It came, this fierce one battle, to this girl, as she stood before the little glass. It was a contest for which the opposing elements had been arraying themselves long, and when again she was conscious that she viewed her own face in the glass, she was startled at what she saw. She challenged the firmly-closed lips to part and assure



her that this new expression was not hers. She was changed; she saw that. We all, perhaps, at least all who know what it is to live in its deepest sense, have had our moment of looking over the battle-field of our souls, and perhaps have sickened at the ghastly picture while believing it to be the price of our victory.

She saw not a girl's expression, but a woman's, resolute, but not exultant. She seemed to meet a hand extended to her through the dimness of the future, to lead her on to the heights of which in her soul she had dreamed. She finished dressing, and went down to the kitchen, where Mrs. Pearson was preparing breakfast.

The woman, looking up, saw something in the girl's face that attracted her attention. She saw that a change had come to her—eye, and lip, and brow were declaring it.

Upon the worn features of Mrs. Pearson there was something also that did not escape the notice of Lucy—something that told of a fierce inward struggle.

They regarded each other furtively for a moment, and then Lucy rushed into the woman's arms, the arms which had waited through the yearning years for this supreme moment.

"I cannot bear to leave you now, mother. I am sure you will let me stay when I tell you that I must stay for love's sake! I love you *now*, if I never loved you before," she sobbed.



"Oh, don't say it, Lucy, don't, my girl; you don't know what you are saying!"

"But I do," she cried. "I will tell the truth. I did not know that I loved you till last night. I believe I can never be troubled with the work we have to do again."

"But my girl," persisted the brave woman, "I made a promise to your father. I told him I would see that you had a chance for better things. I should not rest if I did not keep it. If you ever need my love remember it is always waiting for you; you have only to come to me if you want a friend. But you must go away, you must have a chance to be something in the world—and how proud and happy I shall be if you make a good and beautiful woman. I shall say to myself, 'though you could not do anything in the world that was great, you kept your word to try and give her another chance.'"

The days that remained to the two together were not glad days, neither were they days of gloom, but they held that new experience which must be a twilight one, an experience that brings with it much pain, with glints of joy, in the knitting of new ties where the old were as things of the past.



## CHAPTER IV.

LUCY PEARSON did not accept the invitation of Mrs. Thorn to visit at her home; she would not have been willing to leave her step-mother after she found how her poor heart yearned for love; the narrow home, the unpleasant conditions which attended the getting of the daily bread, seemed changed. Love and its necessities had brought a different outlook. But there was the object in life, what she had once named a "chance," was now transformed in its meaning; it had been dignified to a purpose.

Mrs. Thorn received an early answer to her letter of inquiry with regard to Lucy. An urgent invitation was sent by Miss Pearson for her brother's child to come as soon as possible to her. The simple preparations were made, and the girl went forth to meet her life-experience. Martha Pearson watched the omnibus until it was out of sight and then went back to her ironing-table to take up labor, and to find in it, as so many of all grades of intellect and purpose have found—a refuge from the effect of thoughts that without the help of this labor might have led on to despair. Labor, to Martha Pearson, had through life been a necessity.



The child of parents whose life was a struggle to keep the wolf from the door, she early learned the nature of this struggle, and from her first remembrance was conscious of a responsibility for the brothers and sisters younger than herself. So urgent and continuous were the demands of self-sacrifice, that little time was allowed her for recreation, or to indulge in youthful fancies and girlhood's dreams, and thus this part of her nature was repressed, never having a chance like the practical side: yet down deep in her soul she held its instincts sacred, and had a vague hope of somehow, and somewhere giving the dreams and the fancies an opportunity.

She lived on in her toiling world, very unbeautiful it was, except for the glints of joy that were really reflections from a satisfied conscience, and when she had closed the eyes of her father and mother, and as the years passed whispered last words of comfort and hope to five others of her own family, she went out from the home where she had lived, went to suffer and toil, until a new life seemed to offer itself in her marriage with Ralph Pearson.

But as we have seen, this man of blue blood did not do her a real favor nor emancipate her from the necessity of toil in marrying her, yet labor presented a new aspect to her for a time, and this made a pleasant illusion. She would keep her husband's house clean and bright, she would take as far as possible the burden of care



from him. While she could do this she would keep him happy, and he would at last look upon her as a blessing that he could not do without.

But from that dreadful hour when she began to realize the difference between married love and married gratitude, labor seemed to change its face, and was not the old refuge. Left alone to her reflections, she felt she could not trust herself,—a wild impulse seemed to beckon on to suicide as the only chance for relief—then again labor, hard labor, presented itself as her gospel, and she was wise and brave enough to accept it as such.

On this day of the departure of Lucy, as she worked to keep herself from utter despondency, and thought that for her husband's child there was no need longer of her care, and that henceforth labor must be for herself alone, she cried to her soul, "What refuge can I find in work now?" She whispered at last, "There is the last payment to make." This recollection seemed to give her satisfaction. She carefully calculated the cost of a few improvements upon the cottage and then reflected upon the probable length of her life, and the amount of strength that would be required to accomplish her labor of love. Then a pang convulsed her frame and she sank beside her ironing table. These pangs were not new to her, often she had felt them, sometimes in the presence of Lucy, and she had stood at her post hiding as far



as possible the signs of her agony. Months before this she had discovered the nature of the poison that Death held in its arrow for her. She had kept this knowledge a secret from her husband and his daughter. Many times her memory had taken her upon the journey she had made to the city ostensibly to see an aunt, but really to consult a doctor, who told her frankly of the nature of her malady, and that a surgical operation might save her life. It was the doubt in his words that had kept her from submitting to the operation. "For how," she questioned herself, "how could my husband and the girl get along without me now, if it should end in sudden death?"

Sometimes, since the young doctor had come to Union City, and had worked wonders among the poor upon the flat, she had become possessed of an uncontrollable longing to consult him. She had often brought to mind the words he had spoken to Lucy, with regard to the duty of trying to hold life, and she had speculated time and again upon their weight as related to the life of one who like herself had passed several milestones and had no claim upon anybody's care. "What would Doctor Rossman say to me about trying to hold my life?" she had whispered. The spasms of pain were becoming more and more frequent and a fear sometimes presented itself that she would not be able to accomplish all she had hoped to before she should be called to lay down her life-work. She wished



to pay up the little sum she owed upon the little house. She would if possible leave to her husband's daughter something that would show that her life had not been a useless one. It seemed to her that even in her grave she would be conscious of this acknowledgment from her husband's child. To beautify the spot if possible where she had wept and girded herself anew for life's battle; this was a part of the work left to her—this and the payment of the few last dollars upon the little home property—was to take her thought and energy through the remainder of life.

To Lucy Pearson the journey away from Union City was full of significance. She was leaving the poverty, the distasteful life behind her, she was going away from unnatural conditions made by her father's marriage mistake, to the home-atmosphere that was his before his gratitude led his judgment captive. It seemed as the hours passed that a changing process was constantly going on within her. She wondered if at the end of her journey she should be recognizable to herself.

Then with a pang came a picture of the lonely woman in the little barren home. She thought of what this woman had told her of her purpose of love and sacrifice towards the man who had wronged her through a mistaken sense of gratitude and duty. It began to dawn upon her in a clearer way how much she owed this widowed



woman upon her father's account as well as upon her own. She felt that it was a debt that must be paid faithfully and entirely. She had no doubt now that she had acted wisely in leaving her, though if she had known of the secret malady that was preying upon the life of the woman she had left alone she might have had. She would perhaps be able to earn a place among the world's workers, and who could tell that she would not earn a home to which she could bring her mother and find a joy in trying to give her a pleasanter life and thus prove to her that in taking the Pearson name she had not lost all capability of happiness. Lucy Pearson was not unlike the other aspirants who are on the road to achievement, in that her hope of swift fruition was larger, before the first encounter with difficulties, than after. She expected to win, to win through her own exertions, and to win speedily.

In this she had taken counsel from the swift transition of her own mental state, and had argued that thus swiftly she would win. Of course the veteran in life's warfare knows that inward conditions do not always control the outward, and when the former would seem to insure victory, battle with delays is only just begun. Yet would effort and its results be more efficient and valuable if each one who enlisted for the prizes of life could recognize this fact? Is not defeat, or rather the stimulating effects of a first, second



or third defeat upon faithful souls pregnant with a something which gives a final victory its true value?

It was late at night when Lucy arrived at the old home, which she felt must be full of associations that would be sad and glad for her. She could hide the signs of the first impressions in the privacy of her own room, her father's room it had been, her aunt told her.

"This was Ralph's room," her aunt said, as she led the way into the apartment. "These pictures and this cabinet are as they were in his college days, and these are the books he read at that time. That stuffed bird he brought home from South America. Such a bright creature it is. He loved beauty, he was beautiful himself," and she sighed as she said it. "You can see by this picture," she added, "what he was when he was twenty-one years of age." She raised the tarlatan hanging as she spoke, and brought before Lucy's gaze the handsome face of a young man.

She was surprised, for she had no memory of her father back of the years that had brought to him the marks of care and sickness. "It is very beautiful," she exclaimed, "Noble and beautiful. He was sick so long, but at the very last, and after he lay in his coffin, a grand look came over his features. I cannot describe it at all."

Her aunt shuddered perceptibly, but did not reply, but dropping the curtain she bade her niece "good-night," and left her to her thoughts.



Lucy sank down upon a lounge. She looked around the dimly-lighted room, her father's room, holding the evidences of his young aspirations with all the refinements and enthusiasms belonging to early manhood. The bright bird upon its perch seemed to flaunt its brilliant plumage in the face of her meditation. What influence was it that insisted upon presenting the picture of the poor wronged woman's experience who had accepted loneliness and labor with a martyr's spirit? She would have given worlds, she felt, if they had been hers to give, if she could in that first hour, in the presence of that past, so connected with the brightest days of her father's life, have been able to say—*My father made no great mistake that wrecked another's happiness.*

She was worn and weary from her emotions, and her journey. She made her preparation for retiring, and raising the curtain entered the alcove and went to her bed. The demands of nature were kindly towards her, and she soon forgot her sad thoughts in sleep. She did not waken until the rising bell sounded, then opening her eyes she glanced around in a bewildered way. She rose and dressed herself, and entered again the room where she had reflected so long the night before. The bird with the bright plumage seemed again to flaunt its brilliant dress before her. She turned from it towards the picture of her father, and whispered as she had the first time she looked upon it, "It is beautiful."



She went to the window, opened a shutter and looked out upon the old home-grounds. An old man was examining the trees and the shrubs. She noticed how carefully he did so, while he had that unmistakable manner belonging to those whose life and interests have been with the things of nature. She thought it would be a great privilege to have an opportunity to talk each day with such an old man, who lived among the trees and flowers and shrubbery. She went down stairs to meet her aunt, who was arranging flowers in a vase.

Miss Pearson offered her hand to her niece, bidding her a good morning and inquiring about her first night's sleep in the old home. Then she placed the small hand within her arm, and taking up the vase of flowers, led the way to the breakfast room.

"Do you remember anything of your life here?" began the lady as she poured the coffee, "You were very young when you left," she added, glancing inquiringly at her niece.

"I have sometimes thought I did," replied Lucy, "yet I have no distinct idea of those days. I remember a rabbit and a doll, I never had a doll afterwards like that doll of long ago, with its real hair; that is why I remember it, I suppose."

"You have your father's manner; you are a Pearson, every inch I see," the lady said, with much satisfaction in her tones. Then she talked of her plans for her brother's child for the future,



and when the breakfast was over she led her niece out to the grounds that were kept in admirable order. The place was in a quiet neighborhood which boasted of its aristocratic belongings and of its fine reserve. Miss Pearson, in her tastes and also in her sympathies, was an aristocrat. She saw beneath the uncultivated surface a something in her niece which she thought could be interpreted as the fine pride of the Pearsons. She was thrilled with the thought that she might be able to educate the girl up to the old standard and bring out those qualities for which the family had been honored. She talked of the past as she walked around the grounds and pointed out the separate attractions of the lawn. "This was your father's favorite seat. Here was the spot where we read together—there is a tree he planted."

All this was spoken with that even, firm voice which seemed to belong to the stately lady's make-up. Lucy noticed this, and observed also that much was said of keeping up the aspirations and habits of the family. She longed to hear a word of tenderness and sorrow for the lost brother who was associated with every spot on the beautiful place, but no such word came.

When they returned to the house Miss Pearson spoke of her plan with regard to new clothing for her niece, and said, "We may as well start out at once, for you need everything new. I



suppose." Lucy felt the scrutinizing glance through and through, and her plain garments seemed to become more common in contrast with the well-appointed dress of her aunt.

The day's experience was a new one to the girl; while listening to the discussions of style, as related to her own needs, she began to feel that she had been ignorant of all but those things that related to the barest necessities of dress. In dressmakers' rooms, in milliners' shops she heard and saw what impressed her with the belief that she had no knowledge of a world where the ladies who came to inspect the bright beautiful things, belonged.

It is true that the rich, handsome adornments captivated her, in a sense, and she was conscious of a strange thrill of delight as she saw herself in the glass, changed in appearance through the help of a becoming hat or jacket. She heard the words of the milliner given in an undertone to her aunt—"She has quite an air—and all she needs is fitting dress." A wave of feeling passed over her which was so new to her experience that it sent the blood from her face and affected her strangely. What was this new world—and what were its laws, that seemed to have the sanction of that eternal law of fitness which no one can afford to despise? Was it worth while to sit as a learner in its schools? This she asked vaguely, and then a sudden recollection forced from her mind all else, and this new



thought was of a lonely, coarsely-clad, hard-working woman, whose life had been one of sacrifice. Her aunt saw the expression of perplexity and pain reflected in the mirror; the woman in waiting saw it also, but what should mirrors accustomed only to expressions of eager joy and self-satisfaction and weak pride have to do with looks of regret or of doubt? And how could the milliner imagine what was passing in the mind of the girl who had been so lucky as to come under the patronage of position and wealth?

"Do you like the hat?" asked Miss Pearson.

"I think, aunt," answered Lucy, "that it is beautiful, too beautiful for me!"

She saw and felt, through her aunt's manner, that her words had been offensive to her, but it was too late to recall them. Miss Pearson gave last orders with regard to the purchase, and left the shop.

"Lucy," she began, when they were again upon the street, "why should you think that beautiful things do not belong to you? Your father's family have always understood the true dignity in appropriate dress; you will learn after awhile, I am sure, its value, and will be ready to accept my plans for you in this respect."

Lucy could not summon the courage to tell her what was in her heart, and answered evasively, "I thank you very much, aunt, for your



kindness, but I think it will take me some time to get accustomed to the new way of dressing." She tried to be cheerful and interested in the plans which her aunt talked of, but she found it hard to keep up a show of enthusiasm when her heart was away with the past.

That night, after the shopping and other business of the day was over, and she was alone in her room, she reviewed the events of the hours; almost like one in a dream she went over them. She would, could she have forgotten the days in the little western cottage, have been thrilled at the thought of the engagement which had been made with a popular music teacher. Music was to her a delight, but to-night as she thought of it, she seemed to regard it as a something through which she would be able to become her own supporter, and perhaps thus provide a home for the woman to whom she felt greatly indebted. Then came the doubt whether she possessed a talent in this direction, and if she did how would her aunt look upon the idea of her becoming a music teacher, or in fact, a teacher of anything?

She concluded that it would not be a wrong to her aunt to keep her secret, so she whispered "I will keep it faithfully and work with my whole energy towards my end, and if I fail, God help me!"

The next week Herr Steck, the German music-teacher came, to give her a first lesson. It was



his rule at the start to try and impress the fact that there can be no royal road to the mastery of the science of music, and that he himself, would not allow a student to disgrace the art by half-efforts, and that he meant to jealously guard the honor of his profession by being watchful against tricks of style—and to be careful that no musical fancy should pass for musical knowledge.

At the close of this first lesson Lucy had that sinking of heart that comes from the sudden revelation that the goal we would reach is far beyond the boundary set by our inexperience.

At the end of a month Herr Steck said to the aunt, "Mees Pearson, your niece haf de way of de birds in museec; she follows de ear better den de eye. She will not haf de what you call it?" and he made frantic passes at an imaginary obstacle in the way of perfect articulation "de power to use de knowledge; she loses herself in de harmony."

Miss Pearson gave him a quick glance that was full of the pride and also of the scorn of the Pearsons. "And how" she asked "did you suppose she was to use her musical knowledge? Her music is to be an accomplishment. You surely did not suppose she was to teach it?"

"Ah, I see" replied Herr Steck, with some embarrassment, "de young Mees haf ambitions. Dese young Meeses hope after ideas of getting



money and fame before they haf tried de wings."

Miss Pearson did not easily get rid of the impression made by the Professor's words. She could not help wondering if her niece had so far forgotten the family dignity as to confide in a stranger with regard to any visionary ideas she might have for her future. She remembered that her brother Ralph had been independent, as well as proud, and she feared what might develop itself in his daughter. She however quieted herself with the conclusion—"It will be soon enough to oppose the girl's fancies in this direction when she discloses them." Accepting this she still decided to watch for signs.

Dalton the home of the Pearsons was a suburb of a city, and quite in sympathy with its opportunities for intellectual and social improvement and within reach of these advantages, whilst it enjoyed the privilege of quiet and reserve. Its social atmosphere was decidedly aristocratic, although there were families descended from the best, who through perhaps, no fault of their own found themselves several stratas below the prescribed level of Dalton's first families.

It may be that this is not a misfortune to a place—this departure from the old rule through the mixture of poorer blood with the best; at any rate it served to keep Dalton balanced in some respects, and made her perhaps a little more



human in her sympathies than she would otherwise have been.

Dalton's church that had been the religious home of Lucy's ancestors, at the time of her coming to the place was in a transition state. Its old pastor who had for years led his flock had closed his labors with his last breath, which was a prayer that a shepherd might be sent them that would lead them on to green pastures and beside still waters.

After the days of mourning for the good man were spent, the church roused itself from the stupor of its sorrow to consider the practicability of filling the vacancy made by death. Situated only a few miles from the center of a college city, Dalton was, as has in effect been said, sensibly affected by it in her thought and aspiration. The minister was expected to embody their highest aspiration; and if he failed there was ready an ideal dress for him, for Dalton's church was never willing to dishonor or think lightly of a choice once made for its pulpit.

Its trustees and deacons consulted the professors in the theological seminary over in the city; they went also, after the manner of spies to listen to pastors in other towns, they heard gray-haired men—middle-aged ones, also young licentiates, and began to find themselves much in the condition of visitors at the Centennial after a week's rapid sight-seeing. Then they returned and had a season of experience with candidates, until one



morning, there rose in the pulpit a young man, who with his opening prayer roused the attention as it had not been roused for years.

As he opened his discourse there were few who did not feel him to be master of the situation, and as he proceeded with it there was a general feeling that this was the man for the church. He preached for them three consecutive Sundays, and on the Monday following the last of his services a meeting of the "church and society" was held to consider the question of calling the Rev. Alpheus Lawrence to become the pastor of Dalton's old church. The discussion was a long and dignified one and was honored by the expression of opinion from the intellectual and spiritual leaders in the organization. Many and varied were the reasons in favor of calling the young man to fill the high position, and on the whole it might be said there was an unanswerable argument for the call.

Deacon Giles gave as his belief that Professor Wise, of the theological seminary, would never have sent certain testimonials if there had not been something quite beyond the ordinary in the young man. Perhaps it might be said that this was the clincher among the arguments in his favor, for the name of Professor Wise was an authority in high theological circles, and his fame had reached the city's suburbs, and indeed had traveled widely and far into other sections of the country.



In due time, and with appropriate ceremony, the call was written and sent to the young man, and after many days a letter came that was a little discouraging to the enthusiastic, waiting people, for it promised nothing; indeed, the writer seemed not to have recovered from his surprise at the turn of affairs, yet declared if the Lord should finally show him that Dalton was to be his place of future labor he would at the sacrifice of ease and other advantages accept it. This kept the people anxious and yet hopeful for another two weeks, and then a letter came with the news that the call was accepted.

"I really didn't know," remarked the widow Morse, "whether he meant to come or not, he showed such an offish kind of feeling, leaving his acceptance till the very last line of his last letter. They say he's spent a year in Germany, and has been made a good deal of over in the city; perhaps that is what made him so indifferent. I must confess it would have been a little more satisfactory to me if he had showed that he was pleased with the idea of coming." But it was this very "offishness" that gained for the minister elect new popularity, and among those to whom it was particularly attractive was Miss Angelina Pearson, whose word seemed to be law in the ambitious place.

The minister had been preaching several weeks in the old church, and his presence in the Pear-



son home had become familiar when Lucy arrived in Dalton.

The majority of the church felt that Providence had singularly blessed them in providing them with a shepherd of such remarkable power as was possessed by the Rev. Alpheus Lawrence. So spiritual he seemed that some trembled as they watched him during his rapt hours, fearing that his brilliant life would not be long. Sometimes when he entered the pulpit on Sunday mornings it seemed to those who adoringly studied him, that his body had been beaten in a warfare not of the flesh with flesh. Spirit seemed to have conquered matter; the tenement seemed unworthy of its occupant.

His landlady, it must be noticed, took a more practical view of the case, and tried to quell the fears that possessed those who thought one so spiritual had no place upon the earth, by divulging the fact that Saturday nights he was often up until nearly morning, and that she could hear him as he walked the length of the house preaching his sermon, as she supposed. The idolatrous people became more enthusiastic than before upon hearing this; a minister who laid everything, even the necessities of his physical being aside, for his service to his church, seemed a man truly sent of God.

Lucy heard, from her aunt, much about the new minister, and thought that he must be beyond men whom she had seen. She, however,



deep down within her held a reservation in favor of Doctor Rossman. What he had done for her in her sickness, being something done really for the soul, could not be forgotten by her. The minister had the gift of fascination to a great degree, it affected the tones of his voice, the light of his eye, the expression of his mouth, his bearing, and it was really in part the offspring of that valuable quality which cannot be long feigned—sympathy.

Let no one who has watched the painting of his character so far decide that the Rev. Alpheus Lawrence was a hypocrite, or even consciously untrue. He had within himself the material for a noble manhood, but from his childhood his environments had been such that certain elements of his nature had been through a forcing process, while others had been subject to neglect, so that he was in danger of becoming a great, little man; a specimen which for a time surprises and cheats itself as well as the world. Alpheus Lawrence was cheating himself with the belief that he was chosen to bear on high the lamp of truth, as few in his age could. But one who had known his early history could expect just such results as were seen in his character.

When under twenty, Alpheus Lawrence went from his home among the New England hills, before he had seen anything of the great world in which he hoped to become a light, and gave



himself to the work of teaching in a western town. He became a hero, simply through his natural gifts. His persistency, inherited from a Puritan ancestry that had compelled success to bow to their efforts towards the best, kept him in the course that he had marked out for himself. Conquests were frequent and powerful wherever he went, and yet it is doubtful whether the simple people before whom he stood as an authority knew what manner of man they worshipped. From the glory of his course he was called home by the sudden death of his mother, and ere a month had passed his father had also given up life, and he was alone in the world. His father had left his inheritance in charge of an old friend, and how it was lost, and how replaced we have already learned through the letter written to Doctor Rossman by his old classmate.

Alpheus Lawrence went into a theological seminary and took up study with an honest purpose, so far as a half-surrendered man can see a true purpose towards the ministry for Christ's cause. He was spiritual minded in a sense, but not in the highest, and the people of Dalton in not being able to perceive at once the true state of the case were perhaps not more stupid than the majority of those who having chosen a shepherd are slow to find him less than perfect. Each one has his own peculiar condition, circumstance, or trial awaiting him through which he must



be proved to himself and to the world, and sometimes men pass almost to Death's door before meeting it.

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## CHAPTER V.

SEPTEMBER came to Union City as a great relief after a hot August, and in the young ambitious western town laid a soothing spell upon nature, and those who had known and loved autumn where its belongings were richer and more varied, felt the old subtle influence that had wooed them in other years and yielded to the fascination of the season in the old worshipful spirit.

Without the aid of the calendar there are some, doubtless, who would be conscious of the advent of the autumn, and Maurice Rossman was among this number. He was peculiarly susceptible to its influence: it was the one season in which his nature felt a perfect equipoise; its voices seemed to appeal to his best impulses, and to vivify dormant purposes. He said under his breath, with the voice of his whole being—"Now I live!"

As far back as he could remember he had been thus affected by this time of the year. He recognized the power of the old spell as returning from a visit to a patient who lived a few



miles out of the city, he allowed his horse to take its own time whilst he lived with a past which the autumn fields suggested. He saw again the glory of the New England woods as he saw it when a boy; he knew every nook near and far, that held anything worth seeing or enjoying; he followed on from those early delights to those of later years when in his travels he saw nothing that to him could compare in beauty to the changing glory of the woods of his early home.

He raised his eyes and looked off to the hills of this, his latest place of sojourn. The lights and shadows like playful children were chasing each other over them; he felt as he stopped his horse on the brow of the hill to take in a distant view, the full sway of the season over him.

A figure rose from a sitting posture, the figure of a woman who had been, like Doctor Rossman, under the spell of the season and of the hour. He did not observe her for some minutes.

At last he turned his gaze and it met the retreating form, which he recognized as that of Miss Emory.

He urged his horse on and was soon by her side. He lifted his hat as he offered her "good evening" and passed on. But when he had gone a short distance he stopped and turned about; reaching her, he said, "Miss Emory I wished to ask you to ride into the city with me, but I feared I might break the charm for you of this



wonderful autumn day, wonderful here even. I venture to ask you to take a seat by my side."

Maurice Rossman had sprung from the carriage and waited to help her to a seat in it. The lady hesitated, but the young man had caught an eager expression in her face, then he saw it vanish as she replied—"I thank you, Doctor Rossman, I gladly accept your invitation; but I must perhaps break your autumn spell by asking your professional advice."

The Doctor assured her of his pleasure to serve her, and offered his hand to assist her to her seat, then taking his place by her side the two rode on many minutes. Then Miss Emory with an apparent effort spoke—"I have made up my mind, Doctor Rossman, that something must be done for my mother at once." With a deep blush, and a hesitancy that was very attractive to the doctor, she added—"I must tell you *much*, in order that you may judge truly of the case, much that under other circumstances I could whisper to no one."

Her voice gained steadiness as she told him of her mother's condition of mind and body, going back to the very first symptoms of the decline of power, mentally and physically; told all as a mother would tell a physician, tried and trusted, of the ailments of her child; and when she had given all in detail she turned her earnest eyes to his and waited for him to give his opinion.



It came slowly, for the young doctor was carried out of his professional atmosphere through the effect of her words. The impulse seemed irresistible to offer himself as rightful guide and protector to this lovely creature who was ready to sacrifice herself to the welfare of her mother.

He was brought back to the dignity of his position by the remembrance which came like a sharp thorn to his soul that she was pledged to another, that while that tie lasted though only in name he could in honor offer nothing but his—professional and friendly help and sympathy. He could be loyal to his profession surely. He nerved himself like a man to give his answer, and he told this woman with the child's heart and the woman's strength, the truth in the case of her mother—the truth as he saw it. As he proceeded to give his diagnosis, he felt rather than saw, that the daughter was overwhelmed with grief. At last a sob came forth, then another, and another.

And Maurice Rossman was suffering inward anguish as he heard these sobs because he could not give his sympathy as his heart would have had him.

With an effort, Miss Emory stayed her tears and then with an appearance of calmness, asked—"And what would you advise, Doctor Rossman?"

"Change and diversion," he answered, adding,



"you might take her back to the old New England home. (Doctor Rossman's voice became a little husky here.) Her life under favorable circumstances might be prolonged for years. Life, Miss Emory is precious to all of us, and you know that one of my profession is bound to do all in his power in helping to save life."

"Thank you," the lady replied with quivering tones. "We trust you, mother and I, may I ask that you see my mother and talk with her about the change. I can rely upon your tact. I know that you will avoid giving a shock to her nerves. I leave all to you, Doctor Rossman."

He was thrilled by her words of confidence in him, while he felt shut away from a heaven of possibilities of which his imagination gave him a glimpse.

He left Miss Emory at her own door, and then took his way to the flat, to see how a young mother with a sickly baby was getting on. He found the mother pale and listless, seeming hardly to know whether it were best to take another breath or to stop breathing altogether. Doctor Rossman took the baby from her arms and tried to soothe it. Its cry gradually ceased, and then the delicate lids closed over the restless eyes, and the mother gave a sigh of relief, and then gave herself up to her tears.

Truly the sorrowful side of humanity was looming up before the Doctor's vision on this perfect autumn day. The old spirit of discour-



agement whispered within him, "Why teach this mother to try and keep her hold upon life?" and "What promise can you make for the future of her sickly child?" Again, as in other exigencies, came the answer, "Life is precious! You are not to measure its results! Your work is to save it! You, through acting well your part for body and soul may have an inspiration for others. Do what is yours to do!"

When Doctor Rossman left the poor little home the mother gazed after him with an expression of gratitude which might have resembled the worshipful look of the old-time miserable ones who had been cured by the perfect Healer.

Surely Maurice Rossman was proving himself in Union City. And if the proof was coming mixed with much pain he surely would not murmur at the suffering if he remembered that never a life proved itself without the furnace trial. Maurice Rossman knew of all this necessity only as a theorist; his experience had not reached its crowning point, which is a cognizance of pain and sorrow as *servants* to good not its *master*.

That night after he had closed his office, instead of taking the direct road to his aunt's, he walked on aimlessly, for he had much thinking to do. He found himself opposite the Emory cottage, he heard Miss Emory's voice. He stopped to listen to her song. The night being a



warm one the windows were open and he heard her to the end. It was the "Rest Song" of which her mother had told him. It sounded, in view of the probabilities for the future of the mother and daughter, very pathetic to him. The song ended, then he saw the form of the singer as she came forward to close the shutters for the night. Doctor Rossman stood motionless long after the lights had disappeared from the parlor, thinking of the professional advice that he had given with his best judgment, and of what it would mean of loneliness for himself, if obeyed. He owned within his own self honestly, that Miss Emory's presence in Union City had been an inspiration to him; he dared not think what her absence might be. He turned and walked rapidly out of the street; he chose a lonely way where he might finish his reflections. His old, free, careless former self seemed to confront him like a spectre, with the question, "Why have you cast me off?" Again the simile in his friend's letter presented to him the "Faun" in happy, careless communion with the creatures untrammelled by the sense of responsibility, whose impulses were a law unto themselves. Donatello lost his characteristic freedom by a touch of sin—how have I touched sin? Suddenly a sense of his ludicrous position struck him, and he seemed forced to laugh at himself. Of all the experiences this of our better-self with its clear judgment and insight, standing aside to contemplate



with distrust, scorn, or ridicule our weaker self is perhaps the most humiliating and sometimes makes us doubt our identity if not our sanity. He felt that he had been forced into a kind of dual consciousness which was not a restful condition and perhaps not a sane one.

A touch of the spirit of responsibility had taken from him the old careless freedom; would a full appreciation of life's work as related to his energies bring satisfaction and peace?

These questions clamored within him for an answer, and as he turned his steps homeward not knowing whether he should ever find a true and restful solution of them, he felt as never before that he must accept the conditions of manhood with all its difficulties, sacrifices and woe, rather than those of the Faun with all his freedom.

The next day he made his promised visit to Mrs. Emory, and found her alone. "Alice has gone out upon an errand" the lady said of her daughter, adding "she told me you were coming to give me a little advice."

The lady went on to tell of her ailments giving symptoms in detail. Then, to Doctor Rossman's great annoyance, she discoursed of family matters so freely that it seemed dishonorable for him to listen.

He tried in vain to change the current of conversation, especially after the poor, weak woman began to speak of the relations of her daughter to the young minister of whom he had heard.



"Alpheus Lawrence has gone to preach at Dalton in the East. I always thought Alice would be married to him after he was settled, but she told me the other day that she had no thought of marrying, but meant to take care of me. I don't quite see that she couldn't take care of me even if she married. I'm sure I shouldn't make trouble between them. I've been wondering if they ever will be married. They have known each other so long, it would seem strange if they were beginning to find out at this late day that they were never made for each other."

Doctor Rossman felt his face burn, he made a desperate effort and succeeded in changing the subject of conversation. It was not done too soon, for he heard the click of the gate and a minute after Miss Emory came in.

She met the visitor with a slight confusion of manner, and remarked as she cast an anxious look towards her mother—"I did not expect you so early, Doctor Rossman," then as if to hide a meaning which her words might have conveyed, she added, "but my mother of course is better able to describe her own symptoms than I am."

"Yes, daughter," replied Mrs. Emory, "I have told him all my little ailments, and now I am waiting for him to cure me. I think a good tonic will set me all right again."

The Doctor, with his rare tact introduced his plan for the invalid, and so cautiously did he



proceed that the lady found herself talking with much interest of her old eastern home, and was made, through the doctor's influence to believe that a visit to the old home places might be of great benefit to her. Doctor Rossman was too wise to prolong the conversation too far, but promising to call again at an early day, he bade the ladies a "good morning" and took his way back to his office.

In two weeks from this consultation the mother and daughter were on the way to their early home up among the hills of a New England village.

Perhaps some of us have known the time, when having been left in disappointment and loneliness we have been able to find peace and even joy through a memory. Maurice Rossman, as he went again to his daily duties had such an experience. The memory that lifted and blessed him was that of his last interview with Miss Emory. He was calling upon the ladies just before their departure, and as at the very last he took the daughter's hand he said: "I should like to hear from you with regard to your mother. I shall be anxious to learn how my patient gets on."

She replied, "Doctor Rossman, we are very grateful for your service to us, and I wish to express my thought of your work here, among the poor especially. Perhaps you may some day have stronger evidence than now, that refinement



and skill and culture are not lost upon a class that seem unappreciative generally, and that to cast one's lot in a new country among formative conditions, is not necessarily a burial of talents, and a dwarfing of powers. Excuse me, Doctor Rossman; I felt I could not go away without saying this."

Doctor Rossman held for a second the hand that did not seem in a hurry to leave his grasp. He marked this with a thrill of joy. There was a moment's silence and then the lady went on to say, "I shall need your advice. I will write of symptoms as often as seems best."

Doctor Rossman received his first letter from her one gloomy evening after an especially trying day among his patients. It gave an account of the journey, and of the arrival in the village among the hills; of her mother's joy at again reaching the home of her childhood, and of her own hope from the change. She told much, but that which the young man wished to learn with regard to herself, he was obliged to read between the lines.

After all he was to have something more than a memory to cheer his loneliness. He was to have the hope of the coming of other letters.

They came occasionally with reports of the mother's physical and mental condition and questions with regard to remedies. There were also touches of description of scenery, and sometimes a word or two of personal impressions. So



the winter passed and spring came to Union City.

"Maurice," whispered Mrs. Thorn to her nephew one day, "I am troubled for you; I want a good half-hour's talk with you; cannot you spare that amount of time to me?"

"Oh, my dear aunt," replied Maurice, half playfully—"I know what you would say, I guess what you would propose for me; but I really cannot think of taking a rest yet; when I indulge in a vacation it must be one of three months, at least, and in that case I must leave a man in my office, who has some knowledge of medicine, as well as a sense of responsibility. I do not see a clear way yet for me to rest. I must wait until I do."

"But Maurice," pleaded the lady, "do you consider that you are sacrificing yourself, perhaps unnecessarily?"

"It is better that I sacrifice *myself* than those who seem to depend upon me," replied her nephew with as much cheerfulness as he could command.

"It may be Maurice," she persisted, "that the sacrifice of self, in your case means also the sacrifice of others. Have you thought of that?"

The young man was obliged to own, at least to himself, that he had not thought of sacrifice in this light; he, however did not allow himself to dwell long upon the relation of his own self-denial to the lives of others; he had his daily



duties to perform—there was the same round of professional calls to make, and he was kept at his post of labor day after day; and the spring gave hints of its renewing purpose and then there was a first day of sweet surprise, which always offers itself to those who have senses alert towards nature, a day when although there had been many signs, was the day of real transformation.

But Maurice Rossman's senses seemed to be dulled. He, the successful and useful physician, needed a physician *himself*, whether for mind or body, who could decide? Indeed Doctor Rossman was fast becoming an abstracted man. While he wrote his prescriptions and watched his patients, and studied the latest medical theories and facts, his thoughts were far away in the old places of New England and lingered longest by the mountains. The letters that came from Miss Emory like an occasional angel kept his desire alive, but gave no hope that he would ever stand in any other relation to her than that of her mother's physician.

And how passed the time with this sojourner among the quiet places? She had become a servant to her mother's wants and growing caprices; wherever the poor invalid's fancy led her, the daughter followed.

One beautiful day, after the spring had set in Mrs. Emory said to her daughter. "I want to go down to Boston soon, my child; I must visit



the park. I must take the walk there on the very first day of May, that I did so many years ago when I first met your father. I *must* go, child. I will not be put off! I was eighteen then when I first saw your father. I remember how like a prince he looked, such a tall, handsome man as he was! I must be there at three o'clock in the afternoon. I want to live that first day of May over again."

The daughter listened and did not offer an objection, but as she thought of helping her mother to carry out her purpose day by day, she questioned her own identity. Was she herself becoming weak and visionary, and passing into senility, whilst her companion grew into youth again, and renewed the sweet experiences of girlhood? Life's conditions surely were mixed and unnatural to her.

They went, at the time decided upon, to the city where the mother in visiting, in her girlhood, first met the man who became a lover and a husband to her.

"I want to wear a blue bow at my neck, as I did on that day," pleaded the poor woman, as the daughter prepared her for her walk.

They entered the park, the lady's eyes were bright with excitement as she stepped lightly towards the old trysting place; she pressed eagerly on—"We are almost there," she said. They entered the walk "We are in the walk!" she cried—she went on, her daughter following—



"There—it was just there where I met him! Just where they are!—that young girl and that young man." The two, who were seated upon a rustic chair, turned as they heard the words—a pair of lovers they were. The rapt look of the young man, and the blush of the maiden told the secret of the story that down the ages, through all time, will have as many versions as there are human hearts to beat in rhythm with its music.

The mother's face was a study—the daughter watched it at first with fear, and then with a growing awe. The expression that only a minute before had seemed to reflect the light and expectancy of youth, had suddenly changed. It was as if the cold gray sky of a winter's day had closed over the azure of a spring morning.

The face, like such a sky, was cold and gray, and the blue bow at the throat seemed to deride the withered face.

"Come, mother," Alice whispered, "let us go home; you are tired, and it is chilly here." The mother leaned heavily upon her daughter as they followed the path away from the spot that so many years before had been so glorified to her that the reflection of that *hour* there, had cast a glamour over all the years of actual life since.

"How cold it is!" said the shivering woman, "so cold! and that day was so bright! So cold! So cold!" she repeated and her form shook and her teeth chattered.



The daughter was alarmed—"We are nearly there; it is only a step now, mother, to the boarding house." Thus the poor girl spoke as she might to a little child whose uncertain, lagging steps she tried to guide to its home before all its small stock of strength gave out entirely.

They reached their room at last. Then the face grown aged so suddenly, buried itself in the hands so thin and worn, and with one long burst of sorrow the tired soul relieved itself of the burden of disappointment.

A sudden disillusionizing to any one has a revolutionizing effect upon the whole nature; but when one has grown old with illusions the experience must change for all time the aspect of life.

Alice Emory never wasted words; even when a little child she was mute before a great joy or a deep sorrow. It is only a shallow nature that relieves itself by babbling; and hers had never been shallow.

She waited in an agony of grief for her mother's woe to subside, and then as the face, pale, yet comparatively calm, was lifted to hers, she read from it that all was over for this life; and that only the hope of a heavenly companionship could henceforth sustain the poor tempest-tossed soul.

"I want to have a little talk with you, my dear child," said Mrs. Emory, when after a few hours of rest she seemed calm. "I have been



thinking so much of my youth that I have forgotten yours, and you—you are sacrificing all your joys to me. I want to talk with you about your marriage. I want to know what Alpheus writes to you. I thought that last letter from him affected you strangely. I want to know if you are sacrificing him to me?"

"No, mother," answered Alice with suppressed feeling. "Alpheus Lawrence will never sacrifice his profession to me—at least"—she added with a confusion of manner, "he wishes to be free to devote himself exclusively to the duties of his profession." "Did he say that?" asked the mother. "No, mother, not in so many words, but I gathered it from the letter, and I wrote to him immediately, releasing him. I shall never marry Alpheus Lawrence, mother! I would not, if he offered with himself the wealth and ease of the world."

"Did he consent to a separation, my child?" asked the mother anxiously. "Yes, mother; he put himself in the place of a martyr suffering for duty's sake." "But I thought," persisted the invalid, "that as the good minister over in Boston said, 'mankind never becomes too pious to fall in love.' He must be very much of a priest to despise love, child! It is such a sacred thing"—she added reverently.

"I know, I know; I believe as you do, dear mother, but Alpheus Lawrence and I have not



meant to marry each other; I know it now," replied the daughter gently.

"I think dear," said the mother with a sigh, "that I would like to go back to Reuben's now. Reuben and you are all I have left in this world. Reuben has been a good brother to me. Yes, child; we will start to-morrow for the old hills. I can breathe more freely there; and we can see so far." She dwelt long upon the last three words as if their meaning was sweet to her.

"We will start to-morrow," answered Alice soothingly, "and I am sure we shall be happy up among the hills through the summer. Then you can ride every day and have plenty of cream, and the air as you say, mother, is clear, and the views are wonderful; yes, we will start to-morrow."

And so they wandered back to the mother's childhood home.



## CHAPTER VI.

As the months went by Herr Steck found no cause to change his opinion of his pupil's musical talent. He insisted again and again that her music was on the principle of the music of the birds, and not a marketable talent. Miss Pearson—the aunt, was not at all troubled to learn this fact, and, as often as the musical professor assured her that the young lady would never make a musician for the public, nor a teacher, she told him that she had never entertained an idea of a career of any public kind for her brother's child. "I wish to give her advantages and means of refinement worthy her blood," was always in effect the end of her speech.

"But de young Mees she haf a leetle plan, I can see," persisted the professor, as he shook his head and sighed over the perplexity of the situation.

The kind man was an odd mixture of strength and tenderness. So loyal to the honor of his profession that he was willing to make himself quite disagreeable if thus he might save his art from being misinterpreted or disgraced; he was as tender as a mother towards the aspirations or



desires of a young soul that had not found for itself wings, but which was hoping to follow the eagle in its flight. Like all those who have cleaved the upper air, Herr Steck knew of the many who flutter and fail of high flights, and his heart felt for such the tenderest pity.

He knew that the best music of this particular pupil would never be expressed, its very sweetness and depth and pathos being a bar to conventional modes of expression; but he did not comprehend that her life environments of a repressing character were responsible for her singularity as related to music. Who knows after all that the birds even express without limit the music that is theirs?

Herr Steck knew that it would become his duty at some trying hour to enlighten the young girl with regard to her musical capacity. He hoped, however, as most of us hope, to be spared disagreeable duties, to be saved from the trial.

Miss Pearson was beginning to feel that her niece possessed, in a marked degree, the peculiar traits that had made her father the fascinating, noble man that she had believed him to be, and had a feeling of pride that Dalton looked with admiration upon the handsome, queenly young lady, upon whom each opportunity for improvement told amazingly, when an idea was thrust upon her suddenly, and which grew to become a conviction, and then assumed the form of a pur-



pose for herself. And this idea was—that the minister was in love with her niece.

As it settled to a conviction, there came an awe over her at the idea of a spiritual light, and an intellectual giant like Alpheus Lawrence fulfilling for her, her hope for her niece. When it became a purpose, her practical skill and judgment forced themselves to the fore-ground of her mind that she might save the bud of promise from a nipping frost, and herself from a humiliating disappointment.

She knew that Lucy had not suspected it, that she was, in fact, one of the sort who held such a modest view of herself that she could not easily be made to believe that she was one to be desired above the many others to whom she felt herself to be inferior.

The Rev. Alpheus Lawrence was a frequent visitor at the home; he had long conferences with this old and influential member of the First Church at Dalton, and then he was acquainted with the best things in literature, and led conversations that became very entertaining through his peculiar gift in this direction. I should say, however, that the conversation became a monopoly, for the minister seemed quite willing to do most of the talking, while the two ladies sat as rapt listeners.

He had a rich voice also, and when he asked the young lady to play for him, Miss Pearson



always proposed before her niece left the piano, that there should be a song.

Miss Pearson, sitting as an interested listener and witness, had a fine opportunity for the unperceived use of her senses, and she made them do good service. It was at one of these song seasons that the idea first came to her that the Rev. Alpheus Lawrence had certain symptoms found only among lovers.

From that moment she looked upon her niece in a new light. She was to fill the responsible position of minister's wife in the First Church at Dalton. And what place could any woman find of more importance? Thus she thought and questioned within herself, and wisely kept her own counsel.

Was she right in her conjecture with regard to the minister's love for her niece?

The minister himself if he been questioned could not have told. Nothing is so subtle as love in its incipency, and its signs are not uniform; so how could Miss Pearson, an outsider, be able to judge correctly upon something, the comings and goings of which are always a mystery? Perhaps for the very reason that she was beyond the influence of love's glamour she held this power to judge.

Miss Pearson had not seen *adoration* in the minister's manner for Lucy—she might have seen *admiration*. His character at that time could not have been capable of allowing him to adore



any woman ; however it might at a future time grow to such a condition.

Lucy adored the minister, but only as a woman with a large capacity for reverence adores what is high and pure and true as she sees it to be so. He seemed to her like one set apart from among men to interpret truth not only as it was given in the Bible, but throughout the great universe—in nature and in the realm of literature and art. He seemed to fill her idea of an apostle to meek, sinning, immature natures ; to vivify and glorify all that had before seemed dead—and she exalted him in her imagination the more, as he seemed to lay himself upon the altar of sacrifice.

Self-sacrifice had appeared to her such a sublime thing, since she had the revelation of the transformation of the character of her step-mother through it. Through this revelation she was fitted to discover other self-sacrificing ones, so ready that perhaps she might mistake the semblance for the real.

The minister recognized in this young girl with her pure aspirations and simple trust a likeness to himself, when at the start he had meant to follow the leadings of the Highest, and not the popular voice. It has been mentioned that he was self-deceived with regard to his motives for his professional service, but at the same time he was conscious of having left a first estate where there was no doubt of the way—no crossing and recrossing of paths to make confusion.



If only at this point there had been a friend near to counsel and warn instead of an enemy to flatter!

Alpheus Lawrence must find the path where he first walked if he would walk in the light and satisfy the demands of his particular calling.

Those who have passed the season of youth are attracted by a youthful voice, by the light in the eye, by a blush on the cheek, for these bring back their own youth. It was something that the minister saw in the aspirations untouched by the spoiling finger of the world in this young girl that attracted him, because they reminded him of the time when he himself aspired and hoped. This was the nature of the minister's attraction toward the niece of Miss Pearson.

Call it what you will—love, or a sense of companionship, yet many a marriage has been contracted with no other basis, and in many cases through attrition character has been saved for one or the other, from inanity.

What the world sees to be a desire to choose a life-companion for opposite qualities comes from the great need of a weak soul—weak in some particular quality though strong in others—that cries out for help for its weakness.

The Rev. Alpheus Lawrence had a scorn for some particular earthly comforts, and denied himself material luxuries like an ascetic, that he might allow his mind unusual privileges. Am-



ateur florists sometimes put around their growing bulbs a sort of paper extinguisher. The stalk shoots up in the darkness towards the light that is admitted through a small opening in the top—it gains height in this way—but not breadth, and thus only fulfills one of the partial conditions of growth. The minister in a soul-sense had put an extinguisher around his nature, and although he astonished his people by the rapid shooting up of his character he was not a pattern of the Christ-man, who was in sympathy with all phases of experience, who ate and drank, and held converse with the world, and yet was not of the world.

This young minister worshipped his own power. He meant to give it every chance possible for growth. He was selfish in such a delicate way that the majority of people whose selfishness takes a grosser form could not be expected to understand this particular phase of the sin.

But why, a reader may ask, if the man saw help and strength in the character of a girl like Lucy Pearson, whose excellent qualities were yet in embryo, whose character was yet in the formative state, could he not have been satisfied with Alice Emory, who possessed a strength of principle beyond her years—and while firm to stand for truth owned a sweet, gentle soul?

Ah, the girl whose character was yet forming



was not beyond the pale of temptation! This made them like when so unlike. Lucy Pearson's aspirations were high and pure, yet their strength had yet to be tried.

This held her from being a rebuke to him, and kept her from becoming a mentor.

To see the aspirations of a saint and the possibilities of a sinner united in one experience is well-pleasing to all who not having fought long and well for a firm standing-ground hold still the middle path.

When Alpheus Lawrence received the answer to his letter, proposing a release from Miss Emory's engagement with him, he felt a sense of freedom that was almost exultant in its character. And if he could have analyzed his feelings correctly he would have found that a sense of his own unworthiness had a great effect upon this peculiar state.

Miss Emory's acceptance of his release was given in a very delicate manner, yet knowing her well the young man was able to discover a sarcasm, and a rebuke to himself that for a moment stung him to anger, which perhaps was merely a disgust with himself for not being able to follow the voice that so early in life called him to an uncommon manhood, and a high single service.

He felt the truth that the lady expressed with so much kindness and tact, that "they were never meant for each other."



He was a free man! He began early to make use of his freedom.

One day Herr Steck entered the yard of the Pearson home with a purpose that had been growing for a week.

He found his pupil in a peculiar mood, which at first he argued to himself was a conceit of his own imagination which had been wrought upon by his purpose.

But when the young girl rose from the piano and standing before him, asked, "Herr Steck, when shall I be able to teach, *myself*?" then it seemed that a kind fate had blessed him in smoothing the way for him to speak out what was in his mind. He ran his fingers along the keys, he would have stormed out a tragedy in music if the girl had been of a less intense nature, but he turned sharply and said, "You haf no need to get money by music! Why should you not play as the birds sing always?"

"I do not want you to find de museec to make you mad and seeck; keep de museec for a leetle heaven always, Mees Pearson. Those who sing as de birds should keep de privilege when it is posseeble!"

"Oh, but, Herr Steck, I must teach! I must earn money! I have some one to care for, some one to help who has helped me!" The professor was puzzled. He shook his head. He was in doubt how to proceed with his purpose.

"You think I have no musical talent, then?"



the girl asked, with a sudden terror of a possibility taking possession of her.

"You haf genius, Mees, but you have not de power of telling de best of you. You would be mad with yourself if you should give out your best museec for money! But do as you like. I haf told you."

And Herr Steck took his hat and went out hurriedly, that he might escape the sight of a disappointed expression upon the young face.

When he was gone the girl dropped into a seat and the tears started—wild first tears of passion. She had staked all upon this hope of earning money to get a home for the woman to whom she felt bound to give help and comfort. She dried her eyes at last, and gave her reason a chance to assert itself above her passion. She thought, or tried to think calmly upon Herr Steck's words.

She asked herself if there could be truth in them, if she would feel this peculiar reserve with regard to her best music, if she would hesitate to express it for the sake of gaining money.

It was a fatal hour for the success of her plan when she decided that Herr Steck had understood a part of her nature.

"What can I do?" she asked herself; "shall I let the poor woman go on in her loneliness, because I cannot sacrifice the feeling for my music?" The hour had come for her trial.



Which would she sacrifice—the woman to whom she owed so much, or the something that seemed so sacred?

Suddenly a thought came amidst the darkness of her doubt. “There must be something else I can do! How do women who have no talent work nobly and accomplish so much? I have no talent—at least no available one—cannot I work as other talentless women do?” She remembered that she had seen somewhere that self-sacrifice and love bear the nature of genius in many women. “I can teach something else if I cannot do that—perhaps I can sew. I must do something.”

She had fixed this decision when her aunt entered hurriedly and asked: “Where is Herr Steck? I heard him enter, but have not heard his voice for an hour. How long has he been gone?”

An ordeal with her aunt was inevitable, and it had come without any preparation to meet it. She told the whole story of her hopes, and how Herr Steck had discouraged her, and then waited for her aunt to speak. It was many minutes, however, before that lady did speak, for she was not given to storming.

She felt that such a trial had not come to her since the girl's father married the uneducated servant of the family. It was well that Lucy did not lift her eyes to the face so distorted with the meaner passions—it surely would have



been a terror to her had she allowed herself to do so.

At last words came—slow and measured—but they were pregnant ones. “You must choose between me and the woman you call mother. Your father made a life-mistake. It ruined his prospects, it dishonored his family name, it endangered the family prestige as related to his child’s future. And now when his sister would try to save his child to her father’s family, she forms her own little plan to oppose this tender thought for her. She would leave her father’s only sister to live on through a lonely old age and the old homestead to strangers. This is what she will do if she persists in her plan.”

She suddenly ceased speaking. Then Lucy with tears of protestation tried to explain her position, while she spoke in honest defense of her father’s wife. When she had finished, her aunt replied: “I have only this to add—you must choose between the woman and me! I will not be too hard upon you; I give you one month to come to your decision.” And waving her hand as she rose, she signified that the conference was at an end.

“One month to decide!” she whispered, hoarsely—“How can I decide what I can do in that time? I cannot go back and take up the old work—she would not have me do so! How can I fit myself in one short month to keep her in another way?”



The poor girl grew pale, and began to lose the sparkle that hope had lent to her eyes, and seemed quite another person.

The minister noticed it, and would have questioned her, but a doubt held him back.

The time was nearly up, when one day a letter came from Mrs. Thorn, telling her that her step-mother was about to submit to a surgical operation of a dangerous character, and informing her that in view of the possibility of not surviving it the lonely woman begged to know if "the dear girl, Lucy" would come to her. Mrs. Thorn added, "Doctor Rossman, who is to perform the operation, has serious doubts as to her surviving it—but as there would in all probability be a speedy death without it, he has advised it."

Lucy took the letter to her aunt—with pale face and streaming eyes, she announced her purpose to go to her mother and to stay with her always.

And what did this proud woman do? She took the girl to her heart, cried over her, called her "Dear Ralph's child," "A noble, dear girl," but persisted, "I cannot give you up! You are all that is left to me! Go to your—to the—to Martha, if you will, but come back to me!"

What was the secret of this strange change in Miss Pearson's conduct? The girl had proved herself of superior stuff, she had earned a place—a true place among the Pearsons. That saved her. Miss Pearson had espoused her cause for



life. The girl went away with the benediction of the lady upon her.

During the long journey from the East to the West, Lucy Pearson had ample opportunity to reflect. It seemed as if the month that had passed had introduced her to a new world of thought and purpose.

She had been obliged to give up a hope that had grown to seem almost a part of herself. Like the wave that poises itself for a promise of power, and then breaks as a thousand other waves have, upon the waiting, irresponsive shore, and finds itself absorbed and seemingly lost, so it seemed her hope poised once so high, had lost itself upon the common beach.

She had meant to do great things, had meant that her work and sacrifice should lie along the highest paths, and she had been obliged to be convinced that sacrifice must for her wear its natural form, barren of beauty, shorn of power.

Yet according to her light, she had been able to accept the thorny way, to mingle with the vast throng of women uncrowned before the world, who are yet daring and doing in common ways, and who, to eyes that are able to see aright, have a starry halo around their brows.

Mrs. Thorn was at the station to meet her when she arrived at Union city; and that lady could not conceal her surprise at the great change apparent in the young lady's appearance. "My dear girl, you are a delightful surprise to



me," she said, when they were seated in the carriage. "I do not know as I should say that, either, for I expected marvels from you, my girl."

But Lucy felt that there was no cause for self-gratulation. She longed to lay her head upon the breast of this kind friend and tell her that she had come from fierce battles, not as a conqueror in the sense that this lady, her friend, might understand victory for her.

But she felt that there were other subjects for her words, and she began to ask the particulars of her step-mother's condition. She learned that the surgical operation would be performed the next day. That Doctor Rossman had been waiting for her arrival, and that the danger of death was great in the poor woman's case.

Lucy would at once have proceeded to the home of her step-mother, but Mrs. Thorn insisted that she was in no condition to meet the sick woman, and that a night's rest would go far towards preparing her for the meeting.

She had taken a bath, arranged her dress and joined Mrs. Thorn in the parlor, when Doctor Rossman came in. He also, though not in words showed his astonishment at the girl's appearance. And Lucy was painfully surprised at her kind friend's worn expression, and emaciated form.

She afterwards spoke to Mrs. Thorn about it and the lady confided to her her trouble and fear



for the health of her nephew. "I cannot make him take rest," she added, "and sometimes I reproach myself for influencing him in his choice of a location; it almost seems as if he were an exile for conscience' sake. I believe his conscience is a tyrant to him. It gives him no rest night or day. He has peculiar ideas with regard to the responsibilities of a physician; he looks after all the interests of his patients. There seems to be no limit to his self-sacrifice. The dear boy! Oh, I wish I could help him!"

The next morning Lucy took her way alone to the little cottage so full of associations to her. As she entered the yard she could have told that there was distracting care or trouble within, if only from the flower-beds that had been well-planned and planted, but which were being choked by the weeds. Under other circumstances she would have stooped to take in the fragrance and beauty of a few that spite of adverse conditions were seeming to thrive. But she walked on to the door, which she gently opened and entered to find her mother seated in a rocking chair, beside her in another chair, an open box.

With almost a shout the woman rose, extended her arms towards the girl, and then folding her to herself sobbed long.

They had a sacred season of confidence. With the other world in sight there can be no make-believes, no half-truths, no superficial view of life's issues.



Martha Pearson had made careful preparation for this hour of trial. The papers laid away so methodically in the little box, evidenced it. As she explained to Lucy their import and added information with regard to the smallest detail, the girl marvelled at the wisdom and cool courage of the woman.

"I shall not live, at least I am not likely to," said the woman, "to see the little cottage improved and the last cent paid, but the money is in the bank and the papers are all here; that is a great comfort. I did think of a monument at first, but afterwards I made up my mind to put a stone, at each grave—besides there'll be my own. I shan't have quite enough to leave for that; but that doesn't matter"—and here she hesitated—"I want to ask you, she went on, "if you will see that I am laid next to Margaret's grave. Somehow the child—well I have a strange kind of feeling about it—you see sister Margaret never could get along without me when she lived—and somehow it would comfort me to know that I could rest beside the dear child.

"Perhaps you think I might want to be put beside your father. That would not be best—it is a long way to the East. And there is your mother—and—well I should seem out of place in the Pearson lot.

"No, my girl, put me beside sister Margaret. There is no need for a grave-stone for me. I shall be close to Margaret and her grave is under



the tree in the corner; remember that, if you want to come to the yard sometime—but that's not likely, you will be so far away.

“Here is your father's picture, and the keepsakes he gave me,” she said, then taking up a tiny box she opened it with a tender touch; and taking from its cushioned place a ring, she looked at it lovingly as she turned it from side to side. She held it towards Lucy and—said—“This was the ring your father gave me before we were married. I was afraid to wear it after I began to wash and iron; I might have spoiled the pearl in it, I mean; this wedding ring I want to take with me. Don't have it taken off.”

When Martha Pearson had finished, there was a long silence between the two. Lucy was unable to realize that all that had just passed was a scene from real life; it presented itself as a tragedy of the imagination. At last she fell upon Martha Pearson's neck and gave vent to her overwhelming emotions.

“Dear mother, oh, forgive me that I did not know how good and kind and true you were when you were doing so much for me, so much for father, too!”

“I did you both such a wrong, my child,” the mother answered. “Such a wrong in marrying your father. I couldn't make it right, your father couldn't make it right—it was a great mistake—and I've thought, my girl, that there



can't be a worse mistake than one like that. It's safe, I'm thinking, to call love—love, and gratitude—gratitude."

"It's all past now, but you, Lucy, will remember this lesson—you will remember it, my girl," she insisted, with an expression of deep anxiety upon her face.

Lucy promised as she would have promised almost anything to please the woman who might soon be beyond the power or necessity of asking questions. Yet if she had considered the matter, she would have decided that there would never come a time when such a lesson could be of especial value to her.

After a moment's silence, the woman said, while a strange peace came over her features, "I believe there is nothing else to say. All the papers are in this box; look them all over, and don't miss a word that is written. Now I think I'll rest to be ready for the afternoon. Doctor Rossman and that other doctor will be here early. I want my nerves to get steady. Read me that psalm which has the verse about sitting under the shadow of the Almighty."



## CHAPTER VII.

"THERE seems hardly a breath of air," remarked Doctor Rossman's assistant, as they entered the long, dusty, uninviting street upon the flat. The chief surgeon made no answer. "He is lost in thought," the assistant said to himself, as receiving no reply to his remark, he turned and looked steadily into the face above his.

But Doctor Rossman, contrary to his idea, was not lost to any of the sights and sounds around him. Some one has said to the effect that it would be a great calamity if the sense of hearing should become so sharpened that we could hear the sound of the growing of the grass blades. There are people at times who seem to realize this condition, and Maurice Rossman on this hot afternoon was one of them. Indeed every sense was ready to do double duty; he was conscious that the air was like a furnace heat, that the dust, like ashes that rose in clouds with each turn of the carriage wheels, was stifling, yet within there was such a fire and a warfare that outward discomforts seemed only incidents to a great tragedy.

The doctor beside him noticed a strange light in his eyes, and an unusual, set look about his mouth.



"He seems like a great commander going into battle," the young man thought, and a fresh feeling of admiration for this cultivated, fastidious man who had given his gifts and graces to a pioneer practice, rose within him.

But little he knew at that moment how these refinements and fastidious tastes were weapons of assault; nor how heart and flesh cried out against the servitude they had so long suffered without rest; nor how as when a fever-struck victim in a burning agony sees pictures of fountains and hears the murmur of cooling waters as a mockery to his condition. Doctor Rossman saw beyond reach a peaceful path for his soul.

They reached the cottage, alighted, passed up the path between the rows of languid flowers showing such evident marks of arrested development, and on, into the house.

At night the Angel of Death himself passed in—and Lucy bending low received the words:

"It—was all—a mistake—a mistake for me to take—your father—from—from—his family—but I've tried—to be faithful—tried—" Then the features settled themselves for the final rest.

Mrs. Thorn drew the stricken girl to her and then kneeling, by her side, she repeated those words beginning—"God is our refuge and strength."

The low, poor room became a sanctuary then, and the benediction of the Highest rested upon the waiting souls.



Ah, who can tell of the associations brought up by the sight of work-worn hands folded after all life's work is over!"

Tender and bitter the thoughts come thronging—thoughts of a warm clasp, of offices of love, of toil and sacrifice.

If there comes no ghost of our former erring, ungrateful selves, before better things have developed in us, none to show us how we slighted the labor of those folded hands, then in our hour of bereavement we are indeed blest.

But this ghost did come to Lucy, and thus her grief was sharpened to agony as she looked upon the thin hands which had served her so well.

After the funeral, Mrs. Thorn took the lonely girl to her home. But there was no place given for the indulgence of grief, for Doctor Rossman was taken down with a fever, and there were anxious nights and days of watching and fear for him.

At last the crisis came and he began slowly to mend.

Through all that time of trial Mrs. Thorn found Lucy Pearson strong to help and comfort. "I wish you might stay with me always," she whispered to her one day when she felt at liberty to forecast.

Doctor Rossman was very impatient with his protracted invalidism, and with gradually returning health and spirits he began to think of



taking upon himself the duties of his profession, but Mrs. Thorn urged a reasonable delay until he became quite strong.

The ladies used tact and skill to make him forget the cares of his profession, and succeeded as well as could be expected with a nature so energetic and persistent as that of their patient.

In most of his caprices the Doctor was humored, and if he wished a song, he had it, or to listen to a certain author he was given that privilege. Sometimes Mrs. Thorn read, sometimes Lucy.

One morning when he was in the library with the young girl, he said, "I have been thinking for a few days past that I should like to hear the 'Marble Faun' read. I read that book in Rome; I read it here in Union City after receiving a letter from a college friend, who made an allusion to the character of its Donatello, at the time I was a novice in the practice of my profession, and now that I find myself in a new condition I should like to find my impressions of a third contemplation of it."

Lucy took the book from its place and sitting down, began with her expressive voice to read.

Day by day the reading session was held, and Doctor Rossman found that its reading to him presented revelations according to the newer experience of his soul. It was not, in a sense, the story he had read in Rome where he could



stand in the several spots where the separate conceptions were formed.

One day Lucy came to a particular passage where the listener requested her to stop for a minute.

"Please read that again," he said after a few minutes of meditation, and she read—"Perhaps it is the very lack of moral severity ; of any high and heroic ingredient in the character of the Faun that makes it so delightful an object to the human eye, and the frailty of the human heart."

"That is it," he murmured ; "that luck is a passport to society, to favor, to success, as the world understands success. When one begins to follow on towards the higher path—begins to gain this moral severity, he puts himself beyond the pale of the world's fellowship, and challenges criticism at every step of his onward following."

Then he did what he never would have done if the weakness from his severe sickness had not been so great: he gave Lucy his inward experience, or a part of it, with regard to the call of conscience to an all-demanding responsibility. Did he expect help from her? He hardly analyzed his motive; he was not in a normal state to judge aright if he had.

She listened, and when he had finished, she met his asking gaze with a look of pity. That was all.



The first day that he was able to walk beyond the home threshold Lucy went with him out to the lawn. She measured her pace by his lingering step and marvelled that one so powerfully built should have such a slow recovery. They went to a rustic seat under the vines, and Lucy, wrapping a shawl about the broad shoulders, took her seat by his side.

September had come—the time when nature seems to pause to admire herself, when she still wears her most attractive appearance. It was a sensuous day, a day that suggested a revel of passion, or a crowning of peace, according to the condition of the beholder.

Doctor Rossman, as he sat there and looked upon the beauty about him, was overcome with the proofs of his weakness; his whole nature called out for help. The girl by his side was strong in her youthful powers—seemed so thoroughly alive, mind and body, that to him she seemed almost a being from another sphere, so vivid was the contrast.

He thought on and on, and as usual Lucy humored his mood, he thought of the girl's care of him during his sickness, he wondered how he could best express his gratitude to her. A bird answered its mate with a thrill that held the essence of sweetness. Alas, September, your peculiar influence has encouraged more illusions than are ever owned! Doctor Rossman offered his life to the girl beside him then and there.



It was at least five minutes before Lucy found strength to speak. Then she said slowly in speech that was charged with feeling, "Doctor Rossman, you do not mean it! You ought not to mean it! You are weak and not yourself. If it were only that you mentioned your gratitude to me I could not accept your high favor. If I had not known of another experience—where gratitude called itself love, and brought in consequence pain and trouble, I could not accept the offer you have made me. I know you do not love as you are capable of loving. I know—I know, or rather I imagine, what a worship and a rest, a proper channel for your love might give.

"Oh, Doctor Rossman, do not put me away from my place as a friend! I owe you so much—you made me feel first that there was something noble in life—something worth living for. Say you take it all back! Say you did not mean—say, Doctor Rossman, that you love another!"

An hour afterwards Mrs. Thorn saw the two coming towards the house, and said to herself as she peeped through the half-closed shutters, "Well, I did think, but I don't know, after all," which remark showed that she had not gained consummate skill in match-making.

That night Doctor Rossman's dreams were night-mares, and in the morning he was impressed with the memory of a vision—a part of the



night's experience—the vision of a sad, patient, sweet face with a heroic expression, a face that came as a rift of blue between clouds—or a rainbow after the rain—a face he had not seen for many, many months.

And Lucy? Did she picture a form that stood in the Dalton pulpit? And did she hear a strong musical voice as it delivered its wonderful message to the people?

She was bewildered when she opened her eyes upon the morning. It all seemed a strange dream—this experience of the arbor. Doctor Rossman—the great doctor who had seemed so grand and good to her to offer himself to her? She went back three years when he first told her it was worth while to live!

Then as she rose and arranged her dress she felt glad to remember that Doctor Rossman had said he would take it all back, and that it should seem as before he had spoken.

That day she consulted Mrs. Thorn with regard to the grave-stones. She thought of her mother's words with reference to the papers in the little box. She found an allusion to a will and in speaking to the lady with regard to it, she was told that Doctor Rossman had been given the charge of affairs and that the little house was to be sold and the money it brought was to go to herself.

"Then there shall be a monument above her grave!" Lucy cried in almost exultant tones.



To follow the directions given in the papers, to have everything done as had been directed by the heroic woman who was gone; this was her care before leaving Union City, perhaps forever.

It was the last of October, and Lucy with Mrs. Thorn and Doctor Rossman was returning from a last visit to the grave-yard, when Mrs. Thorn remarked: "Maurice, I have a plan for us all; you must make one of a party to the East. Lucy and I will comprise the remainder of it. She goes home next week; a trip would do wonderful things for you!"

He did not answer. She went up to him and putting her arm within his, pleaded, "Now, Maurice, do not disappoint me; I wish to go; I will not go without you! Maurice, will you deny me the pleasure of seeing old New England's forest glory? The beauty will not be gone if we go at once! Maurice, you will go?"

The young doctor was asking himself if he should stifle the sudden wild longing that had risen within himself, or whether he should allow himself an abandon they had not enjoyed since he left Rome.

"I will think of it, Aunt," he said, at last, "and if I can see a clear way I will go!"

The next week the three started. The two parted from Lucy at Dalton and took their way to the early home of both.

After they had been there a week Maurice



said, "Aunt, I have made up my mind to start for New Hampshire to-morrow—will you remain here or will you go with me? I have received a letter from Miss Emory that presents her mother's condition as more than usually serious, and the poor lady is continually asking to see me!"

"Go, Maurice, without me!" Mrs. Thorn answered, "I am rejoiced to know that you are willing to go to the poor woman. If you had known her in the full possession of her powers, and had listened to her entertaining conversation as I have you could realize more fully what disease has taken from her and how hard it is for her daughter Alice to endure all. Maurice, that girl is one among a thousand! She has sacrificed much and long, she has sorrowed greatly; but through all her trials there has been harmonious development in heart and intellect.

"I speak of her experience because it is so often the case that trials and repressions and sacrifices weaken or distort the character; sweetness or strength, or power is lost in the tumult, and the worst of it is—the world seems to regard this as a necessary result of trials."

Maurice Rossman, as he listened to his aunt's words felt their force and realized his own distortions through personal sacrifice. He would have endorsed her words of praise for Miss Emory, but he remained silent.

Once started upon his journey, he felt like a



new being; he was thrilled with expectant thoughts, though if he had reasoned with himself he could have found no adequate cause for his feeling. Going to look upon disease which must speedily end in death, was this a pleasant prospect? "

To have a few words with the daughter, who was the promised wife of another; could any satisfaction to his soul be obtained from such an interview? He did not reason, he dared not; but for once he allowed his imagination to hold sway. Do not call him a fickle man if I say that the nearer he came to the mountain village the more his longing soul asked for the one woman who had given his soul its best impulses and had led him on to interpret the meaning of his profession. His real desire had never swerved from this its first object,—this woman, who he believed, was placed forever away from the province of his hope.

Lucy Pearson's words of refusal seemed a mirror by which he saw his own motives in a clearer light.

He saw, too, that her wise arguments held a more practical philosophy than he had been able to gain through all his years of study. He thought with shame of how after showing the girl in her despair, that there was room for hope, and that life might be found worth living, he had tempted her to accept from him a semblance of love born of his own sickly imagination—a love



which with his returning strength he had begun to see was just what the girl with her healthy instincts had decided it was—"only gratitude."

He had tried to help her when she was sick and morbid, and she, had she not in return saved him from an unnatural sacrifice? Had he not received far more than he had given?

Then his aunt's words months before, with regard to self-sacrifice—when he had declared his belief that his life was his own, to save, or to sacrifice at will. In recognizing the truth in its most awful force that he must use every possible means to save even the most miserable and burdensome life he had neglected to respect his own individuality, in breaking the law, even in one small particular, he had found himself out of harmony with the perfect system of economy which embraced all thought and all purpose, whether in the domain of physics, or of metaphysics.

The experience that sends us out of the old gloom does not always place us in running order in the new: time devises many ways and means according to our particular need to accomplish this.

\* \* \* \* \*

Uncle Reuben Devine, the brother of Mrs. Emory, was a true child of nature. Though in his youth he was given opportunities of acquainting himself with the thoughts of both ancient and modern philosophers, he believed that



the "simplest things were the highest," and never was so attracted to what he found in books as to what nature was ready to unfold to his wondering, admiring eyes and teachable soul.

To him nature had her "whole truths, half truths, and quarter truths," according to the spirit he brought to her.

It was a week before the day set for the Thanksgiving in New Hampshire—one of those bright, beautiful days of which November is sometimes so prodigal, when "Uncle Reuben" said to his niece, "Alice, child, it is glorious out on the hill, and from the 'Lady's chair,' there's such a picture of the hills and of the valley below. Will you go out with me before the air gets chilly?"

Alice noticed something peculiar in her uncle's manner, but she answered quietly "Yes, uncle, I will go." And taking her hat and shawl followed him in the path over which from his boyhood he had passed, to the rock where he had found communion and peace from the contemplation of the world of life and beauty around him.

"Was the view ever more glorious?" he asked as he seated his niece in the "Lady's chair," and took a seat upon a rock beside her. "I have been bringing back to-day," he continued after a short silence, "those young days when your mother was here with me and she was my sweet sister Aggy."



"She learned to love and to know what I loved and knew in nature."

"We've watched old Nature in her every mood from this rock, in sun and shower we found pleasure in looking upon her face."

"So many times we came out to watch the coming on of a storm. Aggy was afraid at such times. She would hide her head under my jacket when it thundered, such a pretty head she had, too, and once when I whispered 'it's over Aggy, look up!' she asked 'Does God say it's over, Aggy look up?'" I've thought of it so many times since, and of late—when I've made up my mind that she must leave us soon, I've brought to mind the approach of those storms and how the little head sheltered itself, and the sweet smile when at my words—'It's over, look up!' she asked if God said it. And it has seemed as if we had been in such a storm, and now that the dear sister—your mother, has come out from all of earth's places of refuge to ask and to answer the old question—Your mother, dear girl, seems to have taken up again a child's experience—the trouble is really over for her—She is looking up and seeing God's smile."

"I've wanted to talk with you about her going. She will never leave the old first home—I think—and dear child, you will let me take care of you—I have nobody but Polly, my kind good wife, she loves you and needs you."

"You will not leave us—your mother has



told me all—all—well perhaps you won't like to have me say it—but she's told me about the cuttings-up of that young priest who thinks himself too holy to love. Too holy to love!" Alice laid her hand upon his, and with a pained expression exclaimed "Oh Uncle! It would have been sacrilege for us to marry. We were not made for each other!"

"What sort of a man is this Doctor Rossman for whom your mother has sent?" he asked as if the words were involuntary. His niece colored and then answered, "A very conscientious, cultivated gentleman who has *proved* himself in Union City. I think, Uncle, people trust him instinctively, he seems to carry the proofs of manhood in his face."

"Well, Alice," Uncle Reuben began again—"You did not promise to be my Alice and to let me take care of you, and to give up all thoughts of going back to that western County where there's no scenery, and where there are no associations.

"You mistake, uncle," said the girl, her eyes still resting dreamily upon the picture of mountain, vale, and stream; "we have scenery—'the bluffs,' when in the spring they first begin to clothe themselves with green beauty, and the glorious, life-giving air, and the marvellous sunsets, we can make of them much if we will. And, uncle, it grieves me to refuse your kind offer, so long as dear mother lives I shall be



glad to stay with you—and oh, how I long to be cared for by your kindness always through a loneliness that may come to me, and long to care for you and Aunt Polly, but dear uncle, I have a work to do, the new country calls me! I think, Uncle Reuben, if I am left to myself I shall study medicine! I shall learn to be a physician, one has such a chance to use all the powers God has given in such a profession!"

Uncle Reuben's astonishment shocked him into silence. A niece of his to become a doctor! A strange fear took hold of him. "Is she fated to go the way her mother is going?" he whispered.

It was many minutes before he could trust himself to speak, and then he asked, "Dear child, do you know how hard it is for a woman to face the world?"

"Yes, uncle—at least I imagine that it would be very hard to face the world's prejudice and to feel the loneliness that comes from a want of sympathy; very hard, uncle."

And the sweet womanliness of the face that mirrored a heart made for love, brought from "Uncle Reuben" the explanation, "Alice, my girl, you would be an angel of help and comfort to a man worthy of you!"

Alice was silent, and after a few minutes, when her uncle cast his eyes upon her face, there seemed to be a moisture about the tender eyes.



They rose at length and went slowly into the house. "Aunt Polly" meeting them at the door with floured hands from the Thanksgiving pie-crust, said excitedly, "You've been gone a long time, it seems to me! Alice, your mother has been very uneasy. She is so anxious about the Doctor's coming! and Reuben, you had better harness up Lightfoot and go down to the post-office, and see if a letter has come from him."

Alice did not linger, but passed directly to her mother's room.

"Dear child," the pale, worn-looking woman said, "come sit close to me, and don't leave me any more! Take my hand, child! Have you heard from the doctor?"

Alice was startled by the sudden change in her mother's appearance, but she commanded her voice into steadiness, and replied, "We have not heard, but Uncle Reuben is going to the post-office now in time for the evening's mail."

The words seemed to soothe the mother, and closing her eyes, she lay quietly dozing, her daughter's hand in hers, for nearly an hour.

Uncle Reuben was not long in putting Lightfoot on the village road—nor did she lag until she brought up before the low building in front of which were those who were expecting letters themselves or were anxious to witness their reception by others.

As Lightfoot came to a halt, one of the loungers stepped up to the wagon and said,



"Well, Uncle Reuben, you are just in time: there's been a man—a city gentleman, I should say—who inquired the way to your house. You must have come by the cross-path, or you would have met him. I directed him the straight road."

Uncle Reuben gave a nod of thanks and turned his horse's head homeward. He had not gone far on the direct road before he saw a tall figure ahead.

He urged Light-foot and soon gained it. He knew instinctively that it was Doctor Rossman. And when the strong face was turned to his he felt throughout his consciousness, *He's a man!*

It was not many minutes before they were at the house door, and "Polly," taking off her baking apron and washing her hands, was called by her husband into the front room to meet the stranger.

It was not long after the introduction before she had made him acquainted with the situation of his patient, and how the "poor dear, patient girl" had watched and tended her. "But come right in here, Doctor Rossman," added the brisk little woman—"come softly and look at the poor lady while she is sleeping," and she led the way into Mrs. Emory's room, where Alice sat beside the bed, holding her mother's hand, entirely ignorant of the Doctor's coming.

Doctor Rossman had come many miles to answer his patient's call, but as he entered the



room where she lay, his eyes did not first seek her face but gave an eager, yearning, passionate glance to that of the young watcher beside her.

Miss Emory rose; not a word escaped her lips as she came forward and gave her hand to him. He marked how the flush followed the sudden pallor of her countenance; how a light for a moment covered the sadness of her eyes, and above all the expression of relief that settled upon her features as beckoning him to the parlor she sat down and told him the particulars of her mother's invalid experience during the last month.

Aunt Polly after an hour came in to summon the doctor to Mrs. Emory. "I have prepared her for seeing you," the kind woman said, "and I think she will not be surprised or excited."

But when Doctor Rossman entered the room the sick woman raised herself in bed, stretched her weak arms towards him as an overjoyed child might and whispered: "Oh, Doctor Rossman! I've wanted you so long, so long! I wanted you months ago—but Alice didn't like to trouble you. And when I knew you had come East then I said I wouldn't be put off any longer. I've so much to say!" and she sank exhausted upon her pillow.

The doctor soothed her as he might a sick child, and sat giving her whispered comfort until she sank into a sleep.



"Reuben," said "Polly" to her husband, "what a voice, and what a face! He's a man every inch of him! A man with a woman's heart."

"Yes," Polly answered Reuben, "one only needs to look into his eyes to see that he's something uncommon."

"Well as to that," answered the wife, "I shouldn't have ventured to look into his eyes, perhaps it's a kind of profanity for me to say what I'm going to, but I have the same sort of feeling about taking a full look at such eyes as his, as I've always thought I should have about a first look at the streets of gold when I get to heaven. I think I shall have to get gradually used to the light, giving only a glance at first."

"Well, well, Polly," replied "Uncle Reuben," "you are getting a little poetic. But it's well said, *very well said*, Polly!"

"I want to have a long talk with Doctor Rossman," said Mrs. Emory to her daughter. "I feel strong now. Will you tell him to come? I want to see him alone."

An indefinable fear took hold of Alice as she heard her mother's wish—a fear that might have shaped itself into the words "Will she in her weakness disclose my secret?"

She heard Doctor Rossman go into her mother's room, she heard the door close behind him. She went to her own room and sank upon her knees. She clenched her hands in an agony of



fear; then the hot tears came and though they were scalding tears, they were a relief.

A half hour passed, Aunt Polly was at the door. "Doctor Rossman wishes to see you in the parlor, Alice."

Not another word passed between them, and when her aunt had closed the door, the girl rose and bathing her face to hide the signs of her recent passionate tears, she slowly went down the stairs.

As she opened the parlor door Doctor Rossman met her, took her hand and led her to a seat, seating himself by her side.

She waited with downcast eyes for him to speak.

"Miss Emory," began the man's voice, "I have to present the wishes of two persons for your decision. Your mother's and mine: you will pardon me if I present my own first."

Then he forgot his studied phrases and poured out his heart to her. "I love you! I always have loved you! I always shall love you, no matter what your decision may be," he said, passionately, "I should never have told you my secret if I had not learned from your mother that you are free to choose!"

"Oh, Doctor Rossman!" she cried, as she covered her face, "she told you then!"

"And gave me a chance to gain or lose all," he added. "Miss Emory, tell me if I must lose?" He took her hand as he questioned in both his;



she lifted her wet eyes to his, and the Doctor, never a man to presume without evidence saw an answer that opened a heaven of possibility to him.

However, it was not until Miss Emory had whispered confidingly, "I think, Doctor Rossman, we were meant for each other," that he really felt sure of his prize.

"Shall we go to your mother to learn her wishes?" asked the doctor, when he had recovered from the bewilderment of his first rapture.

She took his offered arm, and thus the two entered the sick-chamber. He—radiant with his new joy, she—calmly happy in its reflection, for as yet she had not become adjusted to her new sense of happiness.

The mother gave a glad exclamation as they came forward. "He's to be your husband, my child? You are to be married on Thanksgiving day." In this way she learned her mother's wish. Is it a dream? she asked, when an hour after she sought her room to collect her senses and find, if possible, her mental bearings, she could hardly tell.

She thought it all over, brought to mind what she had told her Uncle Reuben with regard to a life-work, as a physician, wondered what had become of her strength of purpose!

She also pondered upon the little secret Doctor Rossman had disclosed with regard to his offer of himself to Lucy.



She believed in his sincerity and manhood, and deep love for herself, in spite of the mistake through physical weakness. Why should she not have a little forgiveness for her own seeming fickleness?

The light of her new hope began slowly to illumine her whole soul. She saw her life glorified through a union with a man with a high purpose, and she saw herself the silent, yet efficient partner in a profession that would call into action the best energies of the soul.

Uncle Reuben had learned the happy secret of the two, and had since been watching for a chance for a word with his niece.

He met her as she came down the stairs, caught her in his arms, and then holding her off at arm's length, looked into her face, which was covered for a moment with love's confusion. "How is it," the delighted uncle asked, "that you're willing to give up a life-purpose for this man, who is young and strong, and has the world from which to make his choice, and to leave a poor old man like me to my loneliness and want?" "You have Aunt Polly," she answered, and then, "instead of practicing for myself, I am going to be a partner in the profession—and then—and then, Uncle Reuben, I think we were meant for each other."

"I am sure of it! sure of it!" cried the man, gleefully—"he is a man who will honor a profession, and honor a wife. Take my bles-



sing," he added, solemnly, as his large hand rested lovingly upon the soft hair.

They were married by the bedside of the mother on Thanksgiving morning. At the conclusion of the impressive ceremony the husband and wife knelt, while a wasted hand was placed upon the head of each, and the mother's love and blessing were faintly whispered. Doctor Rossman that day raised the dying woman's head, and casting a last tender look upon her children, she was forever at rest. Then Uncle Reuben said, "It is all over for her, all the fear—all the sorrow. Let us look up!"

\* \* \* \*

It was a strange wedding journey of Doctor Rossman and his bride, as they bore the remains of the mother back to the western burying-ground—but the two were happy in their love, and happy that their loved one had laid by her trials.

"My dear," said the doctor to his wife,—“I believe I am just beginning to understand the larger meaning of the truth that ‘perfect love casteth out fear.’ The mother who adopts a child may question whether she is doing all she should for it, but for her own child a woman is conscious only of her deep and strong attachment. She has no room for doubt.

“If I had been wholly in love with my profession I do not think I should have been goaded on to desperation as I have been for fear of miss-



ing a duty. I should have worked calmly in the consciousness of my devotion to it. You, my dear Alice, who taught me to take a high view of the profession, have brought me, through your life and the crowning gift of your love, to the 'height where lies repose.' You are my blessing!"

They went to their duties—to labor to love and to find fruition, and to watch with the interest of those, who bringing courage and patience and enthusiasm to the West, have given it its promise of becoming a mighty region; thus they found joy in Union City.

The marriage of the two seemed to Mrs. Thorn a wise arrangement for both and she whispered, "Dear Maurice, his nature demanded a woman's love and influence to keep it balanced. Poor boy! He never knew a mother's care, and he has missed something always! He will carry on my husband's work, I am sure!"

She reasoned like a woman with regard to woman's influence, though perhaps she was right, for Doctor Rossman never more wore the look or the manner of one whipped into service for his profession, yet I am inclined to think that as a conscientious follower after truth, he would even in loneliness have found the path that led to light at last.

Lucy Pearson never had what might be called a career,—yet her life found itself in a current of circumstances that was powerful to carry with it



weak elements until at last they found themselves launched on a broad open sea.

The women without talents that are marketable for money, or public applause, do not get into books often as heroines, and yet there are enduring records of their lives that are as suggestive of fragrance as is that of the woman who poured out the ointment. The record reads "she hath done what she could."

Lucy Pearson married the minister—Alpheus Lawrence—believing him to be almost without faults, and when she became disillusionized she was held to her loyalty by the strength of her love.

In the hour of her deepest need when she found her idol clay; when she would seek from creatures no sympathy, the vision of Martha Pearson's toil and sacrifice, after the discovery that nearly broke her heart, proved to her that a woman's crown is woven through self-sacrifice, and loyalty to simple right.

Alpheus Lawrence was not always to wear a mask in the presence of his highest aspiration. There came a time when his lower self stood revealed before his higher, and this happened during a revival, when one of his church who had been formed for nobler things, and who for years had been holding his reserves from truth, and had thus been its half-follower, came to the minister with the agony of a clear view of himself.

Alpheus Lawrence felt then for the first time



the awful gulf between a perfect consecration and a half-consecration. He went down before his God a penitent among the penitents, and when the fruits of the revival in the old First Church at Dalton were gathered in, the young minister stood forth as one of those who was saved from his lower self.

Lucy Pearson never allowed her music to become her lost art, she fulfilled the Herr Professor's prophecy that she would "sing as de birds." Her music possessed to a rare degree the character of adaptation. Like that of the birds, it had qualities for storm or for sunshine, for morning or for evening. It became a great factor in the success of the Dalton ministry for the young, the old, the glad and the sorrowful felt its peculiar influence and were lifted to a conception of the higher harmonies of their natures. Often, the devoted wife of Alpheus Lawrence felt happy to assure herself that she had reserved her gift from the world's market, and had kept it as a costly, fragrant love-offering.

"Aunt Pearson" has somewhat softened with age, though she still holds stern ideas with regard to family traditions and the like, yet Lucy's children love her and are happy to listen to her stories, and this fact is a proof that she is not without tenderness.

Maurice Rossman and wife were in Rome after years of work, among its ruins.—

"It was just here where I read of Donatello,"



remarked Maurice. "I was a kind of Faun myself in character then." He ceased speaking, and fell into a reverie. Alice interrupted it by the question, "Were you wishing the old Faun life-back Maurice?" He turned a look of manly purpose and peace towards her, and was about to speak when two figures came across their way, and looking up they saw them to be Alpheus Lawrence and his wife.

There was a short conversation and when it was ended and they had passed their separate ways, Alice looked up to the restful face above hers and said, "They, too, were meant for each other, I think, Maurice."

THE END.























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